A Saint Indeed:

OR

The great work of a Christian, *Opened* and *Pressed*;

from *Prov.* 4. 23.

BEING

A seasonable and proper expedient for the recovery of the much decayed Power of Godliness, among the Professors of these times.

By *John Flavell* M. of the Gospel.

Unusquisque a deo constitutus est sui cordis tanquam castri custos & defensor, contra suos hostes: Si ergo non implorato auxilio, non exspectato succursu, adeo ad primam obsidionis castrametationem castrum tradat hosti crimen admittit proditionis manifestum: quid igitur dicendum de traditione clavium, hujus castri, antequam obsidione prematur? clavis est cogitatio, hæc enim cor aperit; cogitationem volvere est clavem cordis ad apertionem ipsius torquere, ut tandem reseratur. Amef. de Conscien. p. 154.

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Richd Smith Stoke Damerel

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To my dearly beloved and longed for, the Flock of Jeſus Chriſt in *Dartmouth*, over whom the Holy Ghoſt hath made me an Overſeer: ſound judgment, true zeal, and unſtained purity is heartily wiſhed.

My Dear Friends.

Here are three ſad ſights with which our eyes ſhould continually affect our hearts. The (1) *Is to behold in every place, ſo many prophane and diſſolute ones who bear the very image of Sathan: the face of whoſe converſation plainly diſcovers, what they are, and whither they are going,* Philip. 3. 18. 19. *Theſe look like themſelves, the Children of wrath: The* (2) *is to ſee ſo many curſed hypocrites artificially diſguiſing themſelves, and with marvellous dexterity acting the parts of Saints, ſo that even a judicious eye may ſometimes miſtake the* Similar workings *of the Spirit on them, for his*

saveing *workings on others: to hear such a person conferring, praying, bewailing his corruptions, and talking of his experiences; would easily perswade a man to believe, that he hath the heart as well as the face of a sincere Christian: For*

Sic oculos, sic ille manus, sic ora ferebat.

So the people of God doe speak, so they pray, and even so they open their conditions: these look like Saints, but are none. The (3) *Is to see so many real Saints in whom the Spirit of truth is, who get through the impetuous workings of their corruptions, and neglecting of the watch over their hearts, doe often fall into such scandalous practises, that they look like hypocrits though they are not so.*

These are 3 sad sights indeed, and oh that my head were waters and mine eyes fountains of tears, that I might weep abundantly over them all!

For the first I would mourn heartily, considering that they (so continuing) must be damned eternally, 2 Thes. 1. 8, 9. 1 Cor. 6. 9.

For the second, I would both weep and tremble, considering that they (so abideing) must be damned doubly, Matth. 24. 51.

And for the third, no less than any of the rest because, though they themselves may and shall be saved, yet their examples make fast the

the bonds of death upon both the former; Matth. 18. 7. 2 Sam. 12. 13, 14.

Alas! that ever they should shed the blood of others souls, for whom Christ shed his own blood! that ever they should be cruel *to others, who have found Christ so* kind *to them! I know they dare not doe it directly and intentionally, but so it proves occasionally and eventually: suffer me here to digress a little, and expostulate with these prejudiced and hardned Souls, I will presently return to you again. O why doe you mischief your own Souls by other mens examples? because they stumble and break their shins, will you fall and break your necks? I desire all such as harden themselves by these things, and take up a good opinion of their own deplorable condition; would soberly consider and answer these three Queries.*

1. Qu. *Doth religion any way countenance or patronize the sinful practises of its professors, or doth it not rather impartially and severely condemn them? it is the glory of the Christian Religion that it is pure and undefiled,* Jam. 1. 27. *no doctrine so holy* Psal. 19. 8. *nor doth any make more provision for an holy life,* Titus 2. 11, 12. *Indeed there is a case wherein we may charge the evil practices of men upon their principles, but that is when their practices naturally flow*

from, and necessarily follow their principles: as for example, if I see a Papist *sin boldly, I may charge it upon his principles, for they set pardons to sale, and so make way for looseness. If I see an* Arminian *slight the grace of God, and proudly advance himself, I may cry shame upon his principles, which directly lead to it: but can I doe so where such practices are condemned and provided against by their own avowed principles that commit them?*

2. Qu. *Is it not a most irrational thing to let fly at religion because of the scandalous ways of some, whilst in the mean time you wholy slight and overlook the holy and heavenly conversations of many others? are all that profess godliness loose and careless in their lives? no, some are an ornament to their profession, and the glory of Christ: and why must the innocent be condemned with the guilty? why the eleven for one Judas?*

3. Qu. *If you condemn religion because of the scandalous lives of some that profess it; must you not then cast off all religion in the world and turn down-right* Atheists? *surely this is the consequent of it: for what religion is there, but some that profess it walk contrary to that their profession: and then as* Constantine *told the* Novatian, *you must set up your ladder and goe to heaven by your self.*

But alas! it is not our printed apologies for religion, but the visible reformations of its professors that must both salve its honour and remove those fatal stumbling blocks at which the blind world strikes and falls into eternal perdition.

Now there are two ways by which this may be effected. First, by convincing the consciences of professors of their miscarriages, and the evil and agravations of them. Secondly by medicateing the heart, and cleansing the fountain whence they proceed: in the first of these a worthy and eminent servant of Christ hath lately laboured, holding a clear Gospel glasse before the faces of professors which truly represents their spots and blemishes. If he that reads it, will consider, apply, and practise, it shall doubtless turn to his salvation, but if it turn to no good account to him that reads it; I know it shall turn to a testimony for him that wrote it. The second is a principal design of this small treatise, the subject whereof is exceeding weighty and of daily use to the people of God: though the manner of handling it be attended with many defects and weaknesses: every one cannot be excellent who yet may be useful.

See Gospel Glasse.

I will exercise your patience no longer than whilst I tell you.

1. *Why I published it to the view of the world.*

2. *Why I direct it particularly to you.*

First for the publication of it, take this sincere and brief account, that as I was led to this subject by a special providence, so to the publication of it by a kind of necessity: the providence at first leading me to it was this, A dear and choyce friend of my intimate acquaintance being under much inward trouble upon the account of some special heart disorder, opened the case to me, and earnestly requested some rules and helps in that particular, whilst I was bending my thoughts to that special case, divers other cases of like importance (some of which were dependent upon that under consideration) occurred to my thoughts, and this scripture which I have insisted upon, presented it self as a fit foundation for the whole discourse, which being lengthned out to what you see: divers friends requested me to transcribe for their use; divers of the cases here handled: and some others begd me to publish the whole, to which I was in a manner necessitated to save the pains of transcribing, which to me is a very tedious and tiresome work: and just as I had almost finished the copy an opportunity presented (and that somewhat strangely) to make it publick. So that from first to last I have been car-

ried

ried beyond my first intentions in this thing.

Ob. *If any say the world is even cloyed with books, and therefore though the discourse be necessary, yet the publication is needless.*

Sol. 1. *I answer, there are multitudes of books indeed, and of them many concern not themselves about root truths, and practical godliness, but spend their strength upon impracticable notions, and frivolous controversies: many also strike at root truths, and endeavour to undermine the power of godliness: and some there are that nouriſh the root, and tend to clear and confirm, to prepare and apply the geart truths of the gospel that they may be bread for souls to live and feed on: now, though I could wish, that those that have handled the pen of the scribe, had better imployed their time and pains then to obtrude such useless discourses upon the world, yet for books of the latter rank, I say, that when husbandmen complain of too much corn, let Christians complain of too many such books.*

2. *And if you be so highly conceited of your own furniture and ability, that such books are needless to you: if you let them alone they will doe you no hurt, and other poor hungry souls will be glad of them, and bless God for what you despise and leave.*

Ob. *If it be said that several of the cases here handled touch not your condition, I answer.*

Sol. 1.

Sol. 1. *That which is not your condition may be anothers condition. If you be placed in an easie, full, and prosperous state, and so have no need of the helps here offered to support your heart under pinching wants, others are forced to live by faith for every daies provision: If you be dandled upon the knee of providence, some of your Brethren are under its feet. If you have inward peace, and tranquility of Spirit, and so need not the Councels here given to ward off those desperate conclusions that poor afflicted souls are ready to draw upon themselves at such a time; yet it may be a word in season to them, and they may say as* David *to* Abigail, *blessed be thou of the Lord, and blessed be thy advice.*

2. *That may be your condition shortly, which is not your condition for present: say not thy Mountain stands strong, thou shalt never be moved: there are changes in the right hand of the most High, and then those truths which are little more esteemed than Hedge-fruits, will be as Apples of Gold in Pictures of Silver: In* Jer. 10. 11. *The Prophet there teaches the* Jews *(who then dwelt in their own Houses) how to defend their Religion in* Babylon, *and what they should say to the* Caldeans *there, and therefore that verse is written in* Caldee: *So much for the reasons of its Publication: Next for*

the Dedication of it to you, I was induced thereto by the Conſideration. (1.) *Of the relation I have to you above all the people in the world: I look upon my gifts as yours; my time as yours, and all the Talents I am entruſted with as yours: It is not with you as with a woman whoſe Husband is dead, and ſo is freed from the Law of her Husband, the relation ſtill continues, and ſo do all the mutual duties of it.* (2.) *By the conſideration of my neceſſitated abſence from you. I would not that perſonal abſence ſhould by inſenſible degrees, untwiſt (as uſually it doth) the cord of friendſhip, and therefore have endeavoured (as abſent friends uſe to do) to preſerve and ſtrengthen it by this ſmall remembrance. It was* Veſpatian's *anſwer to* Apollonius *when he deſired acceſs for two* Philoſophers: *My Doors (ſaid* Veſpatian*) are alwaies open to Philoſophers, but my very Breaſt is open to thee. I cannot ſay with him, my Doors are open for the free acceſs of friends, being by a ſad Providence ſhut againſt my ſelf; But this I can ſay, my very breaſt is ſtill open to you; you are as dear to me as ever.* (3.) *Another inducement (and indeed the main) was the perpetual uſefulneſs and neceſſity of theſe truths for you, which you will have continual need of: and I know few of you have ſuch happy memories to retain, and I cannot be alwaies*

waies with you to inculcate theſe things, but litera ſcripta manet; *I was willing to leave this with you as a Legacy, as a teſtimony of ſincere love for, and care over you: This may councel and direct you when I cannot: I may be rendred uſeleſs to you by a civil or natural Death; but this will out-live me, and Oh that it may ſerve your ſouls when I am ſilent in the Duſt!*

To haſten now to a concluſion, I have only theſe three requeſts to you, which I earneſtly beſeech you not to deny me; Yea, I charge you, as ever you hope to appear with comfort before the great Shepherd, do not dare to ſlight theſe requeſts. (1.) *Above all other ſtudies in the world, ſtudy your own hearts: waſte not a minute more of your precious time about frivolous and ſapleſs controverſies: it is repoted even of* Bellarmine (*how truely I examine not*) quod à ſtudiis ſcholaſticæ theologiæ averteretur ferè nauſeabundus, quoniam ſucco carebant liquidæ pietatis, (i.e.) *he turned with loathing from the ſtudy of School Divinity, becauſe it wanted the ſweet juice of piety: I had rather it ſhould be ſaid of you as one ſaid of* *Swinckfeldius (He wanted

Fuligatus in vita Bellarm.

Caput regulatum illi defuit, cor bonum non defuit.

ted a regular head, but not an honest heart) *then that you should have regular heads, and irregular hearts: My dear Flock, I have according to the grace given me, laboured in the course of my ministry among you, to feed you with the heart-strengthening bread of practical doctrine, and I do assure you, it is far better you should have the sweet and saving impressions of Gospel-Truths, feelingly, and powerfully conveighed to your hearts; then only to understand them by a bare ratiocination, or a dry syllogistical inference: Leave trifling studies to such as have time lying on their hands, and know not how to imploy it: Remember you are at the door of Eternity, and have other work to do; those hours you spend upon heart-work in your closets, are the golden spots of all your time, and will have the sweetest influence into your last hour: Never forget those Sermons I preached to you upon that subject, from* 2 Kings 20. 2, 3. *Heart work is weighty and difficult work, an error there may cost you your souls: I may say of it, as* Augustine *speaks of the Doctrine of the Trinity,* Nihilo facilius aut periculosius erratur; *a man can erre in nothing more easily, or more dangerously: O then, study your hearts.* (2.) *My next request is, that you will carefully look to your Conversations, and be accurate in all your*

waies,

wayes, hold forth the Word of life: be sure by the strictness and holiness of your lives, to settle your selves in the very consciences of your enemies. Remember that your lives must be produced in the great day, to judge the world, 1 Cor. 6. 2. *Oh then what manner of persons ought you to be! You have many eyes over you, the Omniscient eye of God, that searches the heart and reins,* Rev. 2. 23. *The vigilant eye of Satan,* Job 1. 7, 8. *The envious eyes of enemies, that curiously observe you,* Psal. 5. 8. *The quick and observant eye of Conscience, which none of your actions escape,* Rom. 9. 1.

Oh then be precise, and accurate in all manner of conversation: keep up the power of godliness in your Closets *and* Families, *and then you will not let it fall in your more publick imployments, and converses in the world: I have often told you, that it is the honour of the Gospel, that it makes the best Parents and Children; the best Masters and Servants; the best Husbands and Wives in the world.*

My third and last request is, that you pray for me: I hope I can say, and I am sure some of you have acknowledged, that I came at first among you, as the return and answer of your Prayers: And indeed so it should be, see Luke 10. 2. *I am perswaded also, I*

have

have been carried on in my work by your prayers: 'tis ſweet when 'tis ſo, ſee Epheſ. 6. 18, 19. *And I hope by your prayers to receive yet a farther benefit, even that which is mentioned*, Heb. 13.18,19. Philem. 22. *And truely 'tis but equal you ſhould pray for me, I have often prayed for you: Let the Pulpit, Family, and Cloſet witneſs for me: and God forbid I ſhould ſin againſt the Lord in ceaſing to pray for you.*

Yea, Friends, your own intereſt may perſwade to it: what mercies you obtain for me, redound to your own advantage, if God preſerve me, it is for your uſe and ſervice: the more gifts and graces a Miniſter hath, the better for them that ſhall wait on his Miniſtry: the more God gives in to me, the more I ſhall be able to give out to you. I will detain you no longer, but to entreat you to accept this ſmal teſtification of my great love, and have recourſe to it, according as the exigencies of your condition ſhall require: Read it conſideringly, and obediently; Judge it not by the dreſs and ſtile, but by the weight and ſavour of what you read. 'Tis *a good rule of* Bernard, in legendis libris, non quæramus ſcientiam ſed ſaporem, (i. e.) *in reading Books, regard not ſo much the ſcience, as the ſavour: That it may prove*

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the savour of life unto life to you, and all those into whose hands it shall come, is the hearty desire of

Your loving and
faithful Pastor,

JOHN FLAVELL.

From my Study
at Ley *in* Slapton,
Octob. 7. 1667.

Prov. 4. 23.

Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of Life.

THe Heart of man is his worst part before it be regenerate, and the best afterwards; It is the seat of Principles, and fountain of Actions. The eye of God is, and the eye of the Christian ought to be, principally fixed upon it.

The greatest difficulty in Conversion is to win the heart to God, and the greatest difficulty after Conversion is to keep the heart with God. Here lies the very pinch and stress of Religion; here's that that makes the way to life a narrow way, and the Gate of Heaven a straight Gate. Direction and help in this great work, is the scope and summe of this Text; wherein we have.

1. An Exhortation, *Keep thy heart with all diligence.*

2. The Reason or Motive inforcing it, *For out of it are the issues of Life.*

In the Exhortation I shall Consider,

1. The Matter of the Duty.
2. The manner of performing it.

1. The Matter of the Duty; *Keep thy Heart.* Heart is not here taken properly for that noble part of the Body which Philosophers call the *primum vivens, & ultimum moriens*; the first that lives, and the last that dies; but by Heart in a Metaphor, the Scripture sometimes understands some particular noble facultie of the Soul, in *Rom.* 1. 21. it is put for the understanding part, their foolish Heart (*i. e.*) *their foolish Understanding was darkened.* And *Psal.* 119. 11. It is put for the Memory, *Thy Word have I hid in my Heart.* And *John* 1. 3. 20 It is put for the Conscience, which hath in it both the light of the Understanding, and the recognitions of the Memory: If our heart Condemn us, (*i.e.*) if our Conscience; whose proper Office it is to condemn. But here we are to take it more generally for the whole Soul or inner Man; for look what the Heart is to the Body, that the Soul is to the Man: and what Health is to the Heart; that Holiness is to the Soul: *Quod sanitas in corpore, id sanctitas in corde.* The state of the whole Body depends upon the soundness and vigour of the Heart, and the everlasting state of the whole

whole man upon the good or ill condition of the Soul.

And by keeping the Heart understand, the *diligent* and *constant* use and improvement of all holy Means and Duties to preserve the Soul from sin, and maintain its sweet and free communion with God.

* *Lavater* in loc. will have the word taken from a besieged Garrison, begirt by many Enemies without, and in danger of being betrayed by treacherous Citizens within, in which danger the Souldiers upon pain of death are commanded to watch: and whereas the expression, (keep thy heart) seems to put it upon us as our work; yet it doth not imply a sufficiency or ability in us to do it; we are as able to stop the Sun in its course, or make the Rivers run backward, as by our own skill and power to rule and order our hearts: we may as well be our own *Saviours*, as our own *Keepers*, and yet *Solomon* speaks properly enough, when he saith, *keep thy*

* I say constant, for the reason added in the Text, extends the duty to all the states and conditions of a Christians life, and makes it bind *ad semper:* If the heart must be kept because out of it are the issues of life, then as long as these issues of life do flow out of it, we are obliged to keep it.

Heart, because the duty is ours, though the power be Gods. A Natural man hath no power, a gracious man hath some; though not sufficient, and that power he hath depends upon the exciting and assisting strength of Christ; *Gratia gratiam postulat*, Grace within us is beholding to Grace without us, *John* 15. 5. *Without me ye can do nothing.* So much of the matter of the Duty.

2. The Manner of performing it, is *With all diligence*; the Hebrew is very Emphatical מכל משמר *cum omni custodia*, keep with all keeping; *q. d.* keep, keep; set double Guards, your hearts will be gone else: And this vehemency of expression with which the duty is urged, plainly implies how difficult it is to keep our Hearts, and how dangerous to let them go.

2. The Reason or Motive quickning to this Duty is very forcible and weighty, *For out of it are the issues of life.* That is, it is the Source and Fountain of all vital actions and operations; *Hinc Fons boni & peccandi origo*, saith *Jerom*; it is the Spring and Original both of good and evil: as the spring in a Watch that sets all the Wheels in motion. The Heart is the Treasury, the Hand and Tongue but

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the Shops, what is in these came from thence; the hand and tongue alwaies begins where the heart ends. The heart contrives, and the members execute, *Luke 6. 46. A good man out of the good treasury of his heart bringeth forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasury of his heart bringeth forth evil things; for out of the abundance of his heart his mouth speaketh.* So then, if the heart erre in its work, these must needs miscarry in theirs; for heart-errors are like the errors of the first concoction which cannot be rectified afterwards: Or like the mis-placing and inverting of the stamps and letters in the Press, which must needs cause so many errata's in all the Copies that are printed off. O then! how important a Duty is that which is contained in the following Proposition?

Doct. *That the keeping and right managing of the heart in every condition, is the great business of a Christians life.*

What the Philosopher saith of waters is as properly applicable to hearts, *suis terminis difficilè continentur*; 'tis hard to keep them within any bounds: God hath set bounds and limits to them, yet how frequently do they transgress. not only the bounds of Grace and Religion, but

even of Reason and common Honesty; *Hic labor hoc opus est*, this is that which affords the Christian matter of labour, fear and trembling to his dying day. 'Tis not the cleansing of the hand that makes a Christian, for many a Hypocrite can shew as fair a hand as he, but the purifying, watching, and right ordering of the heart; this is the thing that provokes so many sad complaints, and costs so many deep groans and brinish tears. 'Twas the pride of *Hezekiah*'s heart that made him lye in the dust mourning before the Lord, 2 *Chron.* 32. 26. 'Twas the fear of Hypocrisie invading the heart, that made *David* cry, *Let my heart be sound in thy Statutes that I be not ashamed*, *Psal.* 119. 80. 'Twas the sad experience he had of the Divisions and Distractions of his own heart in the Service of God, that made him pour out that Prayer, *Psal.* 86. 11. *Unite my heart to fear thy Name.*

The Method in which I shall improve the Point, shall be this.

1. First I shall inquire what the keeping of the heart supposes and imports.

2. Secondly, Assign divers Reasons, why Christians must make this the great work and business of their lives.

3. Thirdly, Point at those special seasons

sons which especially call for this diligence in keeping the heart.

4. Fourthly and lastly, apply the whole in several uses.

1. What the keeping of the Heart supposes and imports.

To keep the heart necessarily supposes a previous work of Sanctification; which hath set the heart right by giving it a new Spiritual bent and inclination, for as long as the heart is not *set right* by Grace, as to its habitual frame, no Duties or Means can *keep it right* with God. Self is the Poise of the unsanctified heart, which Byasses and moves it in all its designs and actions; and as long as it is so, it is impossible that any external means should keep it with God.

Man by Creation was of one constant uniform frame and tenour of Spirit, held one straight and even course; not one thought or faculty ravell'd or disorder'd, his minde had a perfect illumination to understand and know the will of God, his will a perfect compliance therewith, his sensitive appetite and other inferiour powers, stood in a most obedient subordination.

Man by degeneration is become a most disordered and rebellious Creature,

conteſting with, and oppoſing his Maker, as the *firſt cauſe*, by ſelf dependance; as the *chiefeſt good*, by ſelf-love; as the *higheſt Lord*, by ſelf-will; and as the *laſt end*, by ſelf-ſeeking; and ſo is quite diſordered, and all his acts irregular: His illuminated underſtanding is clouded with ignorance, his complying will, full of rebellion and ſtubbornneſſe; his ſubordinate powers, caſting off the dominion and government of the ſuperiour faculties.

But by Regeneration, this diſordered Soul is ſet right again; Sanctification being the rectifying, and due framing, or as the Scripture phraſes it, the renovation of the Soul after the Image of God, *Eph.* 4.24. in which, *ſelf dependance* is removed by Faith; *ſelf-love*, by the love of God; *ſelf will*, by ſubjection and obedience to the Will of God; and *ſelf-ſeeking*, by ſelf-denyal. The darkned underſtanding is again illuminated, *Eph.* 1.18. the refractory will ſweetly ſubdued, *Pſal.* 110.3. the rebellious appetite, or concupiſcence, gradually conquered, *Rom.* 6.7. *per tot.* And thus the Soul which ſin had univerſally depraved, is again by grace reſtored and rectified.

This being preſuppoſed, it will not be difficult to apprehend, what it is to keep the

the heart, which is nothing else but the *constant care and diligence of such a renewed man, to preserve his soul in that holy frame to which Grace hath reduced it, and daily strives to hold it.*

For though grace hath in great measure rectified the Soul, and given it an habitual and heavenly temper; yet Sin often actually discomposes it again; so that even a gracious heart is like a musical Instrument, which though it be never so exactly tuned, a small matter brings it out of tune again; yea hang it aside but a little and it will need setting again, before you can play another Lesson on it: even so stands the case with gracious hearts; if they are in frame in one duty, yet how dull, dead and disordered, when they come to another: and therefore every duty needs a particular preparation of the heart, *Job* 11. 13. *If thou prepare thine heart, and stretch out thy hands towards him*: Well then, to keep the heart, is carefully to preserve it from sin which disorders it; and maintain that spiritual and gracious frame which fits it for a life of communion with God: and this includes these six acts in it.

1. First, frequent observation of the frame of the heart, turning in and examining

mining how the case stands with it, this is one part of the work. Carnal and formal persons take no heed to this, they cannot be brought to confer with their own hearts; there are some men and women that have lived forty or fifty years in the world, and have scarce had one hours discourse with their own hearts all that while: 'tis an hard thing to bring a man and himself together upon such an account; but Saints know those Soliloquies and self-conferences to be of excellent use and advantage. The Heathen could say, *anima sedendo & quiescendo fit sapiens*, the Soul is made wise by sitting still in quietness; though Bankrupts care not to look into their Books of accompt, yet upright hearts will know whether they go backward or forward, *Psal.* 77. 6. *I commune with mine own heart*; The heart can never be kept, until its case be examined and understood.

2. It includes deep humiliations for heart evils and disorders; thus *Hezekiah* humbled himself for the pride of his heart, 2 *Chron.* 32. 26. Thus the people were ordered to spread forth their hands to God in Prayer in a sense of the Plague of their own hearts, 1 *Kings* 8. 38. Upon this account many an upright heart

heart hath been laid low before God: O What an heart have I? they have in their confessions pointed at the heart, the pained place, Lord here is the wound, here is the Plague-sore; it is with the heart well kept, as it is with the eye, which is a fit emblem of it, if a small dust get into the eye, it will never leave twinkling and watering, till it have wept it out: So the upright heart cannot be at rest till it have wept out its troubles, and poured out its complaints before the Lord.

3. It includes earnest Supplications and instant Prayer for heart-purifying and rectifying Grace, when sin hath defiled and disordered it, so *Psal.* 19. 12. *Cleanse thou me from secret faults*, and *Psal.* 86. 11. *Unite my heart to fear thy Name.* Saints have always many such Petitions depending before the Throne of Grace; this is the thing which is most pleaded by them with God: when they are praying for outward mercies, happily their spirits may be more remiss, but when it comes to the heart-case, then they intend their spirits to the utmost, fill their mouths with Arguments, weep and make supplication; Oh, for a better heart! Oh, for a heart to love God more! To hate Sin more, to walk more evenly

evenly with God; Lord deny not to me such a heart, what ever thou deny me; Give me an heart to fear thee, love and delight in thee, if I beg my bread in desolate places. 'Tis observed of holy Mr. *Bradford*, that when he was confessing sin, he would never give over confessing until he had felt some brokenes of heart for that sin, and when praying for any Spiritual mercy, would never give over that suite, till he had got some relish of that mercy; that's the third thing included in keeping the heart.

4. It includes the imposing of strong ingagements and bonds upon our selves to walk more accurately with God, and avoid the occasions whereby the heart may be induced to sin: Well composed, advised and deliberate Vows are in some cases of excellent use to guard the heart against some special sin, So *Job* 31. 1. *I made a covenant with mine eyes*; by this means, holy ones have over-awed their souls, and preserved themselves from defilement by some special heart-corruptions.

5, It includes a constant holy jealousie over our own hearts, quick-sighted self-jealousie is an excellent preservative from sin, he that will keep his heart, must

muſt have the eyes of his ſoul awake and open upon all the diſorderly, and tumultuous ſtirrings of his affections, if the affections break looſe, and the paſſions be ſtirred, the Soul muſt diſcover and ſuppreſs them before they get to an height: O my Soul, doſt thou well in this? My tumultuous thoughts and paſſions where is your Commiſſion? *State viri, quæ cauſa viæ? quive eſtis in armis. Virg.*

Happy is the man that thus feareth alwaies, *Prov.* 28. 14. By this fear of the Lord it is that men depart from evil, ſhake off ſecurity, and preſerve themſelves from iniquity, he that will keep his heart muſt feed with fear, rejoyce with fear, and paſs the whole time of his ſojourning here in fear, and all little enough to keep the heart from Sin.

6. And laſtly, To add no more, it includes the realizing of Gods Preſence with us, and ſetting the Lord alwaies before us: this the people of God have found a ſingular means to keep their hearts upright, and awe them from ſin: when the eye of our Faith is fixed upon the eye of Gods Omniſcience, we dare not let out our thoughts and affections to vanity: Holy *Job* durſt not ſuffer his heart to yeild to an impure, vain thought,

and

and what was it that moved him to so great a Circumspection? Why he tells you, *Job* 31. 4. *Doth he not see my waies and count all my steps? Walk before me* (saith God to *Abraham*) *and be thou perfect*, Gen. 17. 1. Even as Parents use to set their Children in the Congregation before them, knowing that else they will be toying and playing; so would the heart of the best man too, were it not for the eye of God.

In these and such like particulars, do gracious souls express the care they have of their hearts; they are as careful to prevent the breaking loose of their corruptions in times of temptation, as Sea-men are to binde fast the Guns that they break not loose in a storm; as careful to preserve the sweetness and comfort they have got from God in any duty, as one that comes out of an hot Bath, or great sweat is of taking cold, by going forth into the chill aire; this is the work, and of all works in Religion it is the most difficult, constant, and important work.

1. 'Tis the hardest work; Heart-work is hard work indeed: To shuffle over Religious-Duties with a loose and heedless Spirit, will cost no great pains, but to set thy self before the Lord, and tye up thy loose

loose and vain thoughts to a constant and serious attendance upon him; this will cost thee something: to attain a facility and dexterity of language in Prayer, and put thy meaning into apt and decent expressions is easie, but to get thy heart broken for sin whilst thou art confessing it; melted with free grace, whilst thou art blessing God for it; to be really ashamed and humbled through the apprehensions of Gods infinite holiness, and to keep thy heart in this frame, not onely in, but after Duty; will surely cost thee some groans, and travelling pains of soul: to represse the outward acts of sin, and compose the external part of thy life in a laudable and comely manner is no great matter, even carnal persons by the force of common principles can do this; but to kill the root of corruption within, to set and keep up an holy Government over thy thoughts, to have all things lye straight and orderly in the heart, this is not easie.

2. 'Tis a Constant work, the keeping of the heart is such a work, as is never done till life be done; this labour and our life end together: It is with a Christian in this business as it is with Sea-men, that have sprung a Leake at Sea, if they

tug

tug not constantly at the Pump, the water encreases upon them and will quickly sink them: 'tis in vain for them to say the work is hard, and we are weary: There is no time or condition in the life of a Christian, which will suffer an intermission of this work: It is in the keeping watch over our hearts, as it was in the keeping up of *Moses* his hands, whilst *Israel* and *Amalek* were fighting below, *Exod.* 17. 12. No sooner do *Moses* his hands grow heavy and sink down, but *Amalek* prevails: You know it cost *David* and *Peter* many a sad day and night for intermitting the watch over their own hearts but a few minutes.

3. 'Tis the most important business of a Christians life; without this we are but Formalists in Religion: all our Professions, Gifts and Duties, signifie nothing: *My Son give me thine Heart, Pro.* 23. 26. God is pleased to call that a gift, which is indeed a debt; he will put this honour upon the Creature to receive it from him in the way of a gift, but if this be not given him he regards not what ever else you bring to him: there is so much only of worth and value in what we do, as there is of Heart in it: Concerning the Heart, God seems to say as

Joseph of *Benjamin*, *If you bring not* Benjamin *with you, you shall not see my face.* Among the *Heathens* when the Beast was cut up for sacrifice, the first thing the *Priest* lookt upon was the Heart, and if that were unsound and naught, the Sacrifice was rejected. God rejects all duties (how glorious soever in other respects) offered him without a heart: He that performs duty without a heart, *viz.* heedlesly, is no more accepted with God then he that performs it with a double heart, *viz.* hypocritically, *Isa.* 66. 3. And thus I have briefly opened the nature of the Duty, what is imported in this phrase, *Keep thy heart.*

2. Next, I shall give you some rational account, why Christians should make this the great business of their lives, to keep their hearts?

The importance and necessity of making this our great and main business, will manifestly appear in that, 1. The honour of God. 2. The sincerity of our profession. 3. The beauty of our conversation. 4. The comfort of our Souls. 5. The improvement of our graces: and 6. Our stability in the hour of temptation, are all wrapt up in, and dependent on our sincerity and care

in the management of this work.

1. The Glory of God is much concerned therein; heart-evils are very provoking evils to the Lord. The Schools do well observe, that outward sins are *majoris infamiæ*, sins of greater infamy, but heart-sins are *majoris reatus*, sins of deeper guilt. How severely hath the Great God declared his wrath from Heaven against heart-wickedness? The great Crime for which the old World stands indicted, *Gen.* 6. 5, 6, 7. is heart-wickedness; *God saw that every imagination* (or fiction) *of their heart was onely evil, and that continually*: for which he sent the dreadfullest Judgment that was ever executed since the World began: *And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, and the creeping things, and the fowls of heaven, for it repenteth me that I have made man*, v. 7. We find not their murders, adulteries; blasphemies, (though they were defiled with these) particularly alledged against them; but the evils of their hearts: yea, that which God was so provoked by, as to give up his peculiar Inheritance into the enemies hand, was the evil of their hearts, *Jer.* 4. 14. *O Jerusalem, wash thine heart*

from

from wickedneſs that thou maiſt be ſaved, how long ſhall vain thoughts lodge within thee? The wickedneſs and vanity of their thoughts God took ſpecial notice of; and becauſe of this the *Caldean* muſt come upon them as a *Lion from his thickets*, v. 7. *and tear them to pieces.* For the very ſin of thoughts it was that God threw down the faln Angels from Heaven, and keeps them ſtill in everlaſting chains to the judgment of the great day; by which expreſſion is not obſcurely intimated ſome extraordinary judgment to which they are reſerved, as priſoners that have moſt irons laid upon them, may be ſuppoſed to be the greateſt Malefactors: and what was their ſin? Why, onely ſpiritual wickedneſs, for they having no bodily Organs could act nothing externally againſt God. Yea, meer heart-evils are ſo provoking, that for them he rejects with indignation all the duties that ſome men perform unto him, *Iſa. 66. 3. He that killeth an Oxe, is as if he ſlew a man, he that ſacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dogs neck, he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered ſwines blood, he that burneth incenſe, as if he bleſſed an Idol.* In what words could the abhorrence of a Creatures actions be

more fully expressed by the holy God; Murder and Idolatry are not more vile in his account than their Sacrifices, though materially such as himself appointed: and what made them so? the following words inform us, *Their soul delighteth in their abominations.*

To conclude, such is the vileness of meer heart-sins, that the Scriptures sometimes intimate the difficulty of pardon for them. So in the case of *Simon Magus*, *Acts* 8. 21. his heart was not right, he had vile thoughts of God, and the things of God, the Apostle bids him *repent and pray, if perhaps the thoughts of his heart might be forgiven him.* O then never slight heart-evils! for by these God is highly wronged and provoked, and for this reason, let every Christian make it his work to keep his heart with all diligence.

2. The sincerity of our profession much depends upon the care and conscience we have in keeping our hearts; for it's most certain, that a man is but an hypocrite in his profession how curious soever he be in the externals of Religion, that is heedless and careless of the frame of his heart: you have a pregnant instance of this in the case of *Jehu*, 2 *King.* 10.

10.31. *But* Jehu *took no heed to walk in the ways of the Lord God of* Israel *with his heart.* That Context gives us an account of the great ſervice perform'd by *Jehu* againſt the houſe of *Ahab* and *Baal*, as alſo of a great temporal reward given him by God for that ſervice, even that his Children to the fourth Generation ſhould ſit upon the Throne of *Iſrael*. And yet in theſe words *Jehu* is cenſured for an hypocrite; though God approved and rewarded the work, yet he abhorred and rejected the perſon that did it as hypocritical: and wherein lay his hypocriſie? but in this, that he took no heed to walk in the ways of the Lord with his heart, (*i.e*) he did all inſincerely and for ſelf-ends; and though the work he did were materially good, yet he not purging his heart from thoſe unworthy ſelf-deſigns in doing it, was an hypocrite: And *Simon* of whom we ſpake before, though he appeared ſuch a perſon that the Apoſtle could not regularly refuſe him, yet his hypocriſie was quickly diſcovered: and what diſcovered it? but this, that though he profeſſed and aſſociated himſelf with the Saints, yet he was a ſtranger to the mortification of heart-ſins; *Thy heart is not right with*

God, *Acts* 8. 21.— 'Tis true, there is a great difference among Chriſtians themſelves, in their diligence and dexterity about heart-work; ſome are more converſant and ſucceſful in it then others are, but he that takes no heed to his heart, he that is not careful to order it aright before God, is but a hypocrite, *Ezek.* 33. 31, 32. *And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and ſit before thee* [*as my people*] *and they hear thy words, but they will not do them; for with their mouth they ſhew much love, but their heart goes after their covetouſneſs.* Here were a company of formal hypocrits, as is evident by that expreſſion [*as my people*] like them, but not of them: and what made them ſo? their out-ſide was fair, here were reverent poſtures, high profeſſions, much ſeeming joy and delight in Ordinances, thou art to them as a lovely Song; yea, but for all that, they kept not their hearts with God in thoſe duties, their hearts were commanded by their luſts, they went after their covetouſneſs; had they kept their hearts with God all had been well, but not regarding which way their heart went in duty; there lay the coare of their hypocriſie.

Object. If any upright Soul ſhould hence

hence infer, then I am an hypocrite too, for many times my heart departs from God in duty, do what I can, yet I cannot hold it close with God.

Sol. To this I answer, the very Objection carries in it, its own Solution: Thou sayest, do what I can, yet I cannot keep my heart with God. Soul, if thou dost what thou canst, thou hast the blessing of an upright, though God sees good to exercise thee under the affliction of a discomposed heart. There remains still some wildness in the thoughts and fancies of the best to humble them; but if you find a care before to prevent them, and opposition against them when they come, grief and sorrow afterwards; you will find enough to clear you from raigning hypocrisie. (1) This fore-care is seen partly in laying up the word in thine heart to prevent them, *Psal.* 119. 11. *Thy word have I hid in mine heart that I might not sin against thee:* partly in our indeavours to ingage our hearts to God, *Jer.* 30. 21. and partly in begging preventing grace from God in our on-sets upon duty, *Psal.* 119. 36. 37. 'tis a good sign where this care goes before a duty, And (2) 'tis a sweet sign of uprightness to oppose them in their first rise,

Pſal. 119. 113. *I hate vain thoughts.* Gal. 5. 17. *The ſpirit luſteth againſt the fleſh.* And (3) Thy after-griet diſcovers thy upright heart; if with *Hezekiah* thou art humbled for the evils of thy heart, thou haſt no reaſon from theſe diſorders to queſtion the integrity of it; but to ſuffer ſin to lodge quietly in the heart, to let thy heart habitually and uncontrolledly wander from God, is a ſad and dangerous ſymptom indeed.

3. The beauty of our Converſation ariſes from the heavenly frames, and holy order of our ſpirits; there is a ſpiritual luſtre and beauty in the converſation of Saints, *The righteous is more excellent than his Neighbour*, they ſhine as the lights of the world; but whatever luſtre and beauty is in their lives, comes from the excellency of their ſpirits; as the Candle within, puts a luſtre upon the Lanthorn in which it ſhines. It is impoſſible that a diſordered and neglected heart, ſhould ever produce a well-ordered converſation; and ſince (as the Text obſerves) the iſſues or ſtreams of life flow out of the heart as their fountain, it muſt needs follow, that ſuch as the heart is, the life will be: hence 1 *Pet.* 2. 11, 12. *Abſtain from fleſhly luſts — — having your converſ-*

converſation honeſt, * or beautiful * καλὴν as the Greek word imports. So *Iſa.* 55. 7. *Let the wicked forſake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts.* His way notes the courſe of his life, his thoughts the frame of his heart; and therefore ſince the way and courſe of his life flows from his thoughts, or the frame of his heart, both or neither will be forſaken: the heart is the womb of all actions, theſe actions are virtually and ſeminally contained in our thoughts, theſe thoughts being once made up into affections, are quickly made out into ſuitable actions and practiſes. If the heart be wicked, then as Chriſt ſaith, *Matth.* 15. 19. *Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, &c.* Mark the order, firſt, wanton or revengeful thoughts, then unclean or murderous practiſes.

And if the heart be holy and ſpiritual, then as *David* ſpeaks from ſweet experience, in *Pſal.* 45. 1. *My heart is* [*inditing*] *a good matter, I ſpeak of the things which* [*I have made*] *my tongue is as the pen of a ready writer.* Here's a life richly beautified with good works; ſome ready made; *I will ſpeak of the things which I have made:* others upon the wheel making

king, my heart is inditing, but both proceeding from the heavenly frame of his heart.

Put but the heart in frame, and the life will quickly diſcover that it is ſo. I think it is not very difficult to diſcern by the duties and converſes of Chriſtians, what frames their ſpirits are under; take a Chriſtian in a good frame, and how ſerious, heavenly, and profitable will his converſes and duties be! what a lovely companion is he, during the continuance of it! 'twould do any ones heart good to be with him at ſuch a time, *Pſal.* 37. 30. 31. *The mouth of the righteous ſpeaketh wiſdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment, the law of his God is in his heart.*

When the heart is up with God, and full of God, how dexterouſly and ingeniouſly will he winde in ſpiritual diſcourſe, improving every occaſion and advantage to ſome heavenly purpoſe, few words run then at the waſt Spout.

And what elſe can be the reaſon, why the diſcourſes and duties of many Chriſtians are become ſo frothy and unprofitable, their communion both with God, and one another become as a dry ſtalk, but becauſe their hearts are neglected,

lected. Surely this must be the reason of it, and verily it is an evil greatly to be bewailed, for as by this Christian-fellowship is become a sapless thing, so the attracting beauty that was wont to shine from the Conversations of the Saints upon the faces and consciences of the world, (which if it did not allure and bring them in love with the ways of God; yet at least left a testimony in their consciences of the excellency of those men and their way) this is in a great measure lost, to the unspeakable detriment of Religion.

Time was, when Christians did carry it at such a rate, that the world stood at gaze at them, as that word, 1 *Pet.* 4. 4. imports, their life ξενίζονται and language was of a different strain from others, their tongues discovered them to be *Galileans* where ever they came; but now since vain speculations, and fruitless controversies have so much obtained, and heart-work, practical godliness so much neglected among Professors, the case is sadly altered, their discourse is become like other mens: if they come among you now, they may (to allude to that, *Acts* 2. 6.) *Hear every man speak in his own language.* And truly

truly I have little hope to see this evil redressed, and the credit of Religion again repaired; till Christians fall again to their old work, till they ply heart-work closer: when the salt of heavenly mindedness is again cast into the Spring, the *streams* will run clearer and sweeter.

4. The comfort of our Souls doth much depend upon the keeping of our hearts, for he that is negligent in attending his own heart, is (ordinarily) a great stranger to assurance, and the sweet comforts flowing from it.

Indeed, if the *Antinomian* Doctrin were true, which teaches you to reject all marks and signs for the trial of your conditions, telling you it is onely the Spirit that immediately assures you by witnessing your adoption directly without them, then you might be careless of your hearts, yea, strangers to them, and yet no strangers to comfort: but since both Scripture and experience do confute this dotage, I hope you will never look for comfort in that unscriptural way. I deny not but it is the work and office of the Spirit to assure you, and yet do confidently affirm, that if ever you attain assurance in the ordinary way wherein God dispences it, you must take pains with

with your own hearts, you may expect your comforts upon easier terms; but I am mistaken, if ever you enjoy them upon any other: *Give all diligence; prove your selves:* this is the Scripture way. I remember Mr. *Roberts* in his Treatise of the Covenant, tells us, That he knew a Christian who in the infancy of his Christianity, so vehemently panted after the infallible assurance of God's love, that for a long time together he earnestly desired some voyce from Heaven; yea, sometimes walking in the solitary fields, earnestly desired some miraculous voyce from the Trees and stones there; this, after many desires and longings was denied him; but in time, a better was afforded in the ordinary way of searching the word, and his own heart. An instance of the like nature the learned *Gerson* gives us, Of one that was driven by temptation upon the very borders of desperation, at last being sweetly settled and assured, one asked him, How he attained it? He answered, *Non ex nova aliqua revelatione, &c.* Not by any extraordinary revelation, but by subjecting his understanding to the Scriptures, and comparing his own heart with them. The Spirit indeed assures by witnessing

nessing our adoption, and he witnesseth two ways. (1) Objectively, (*i. e.*) by working those Graces in our Souls which are the Conditions of the Promise, and so the Spirit and his Graces in us are all one; the Spirit of God dwelling in us, is a mark of our Adoption. Now the Spirit cannot be discerned in his essence, but in his operations; and to discern these is to discern the Spirit; and how these should be discerned without serious searching and diligent watching of the heart, I cannot imagine. (2) The other way of the Spirits witnessing is effectively, (*i. e.*) by irradiating the Soul with a grace-discovering light, shining upon his own work; and this in order of nature follows the former work: he first infuses the grace, and then opens the eye of the Soul to see it. Now since the heart is the subject of that infused grace, even this way of the Spirits witnessing also includes the necessity of keeping carefully our own hearts: for (1) A neglected heart is so confused and dark, that the little grace which is in it is not ordinarily discernable: the most accurate and laborious Christians, that take most pains, and spend most time about their hearts, do yet finde it very

very difficult to discover the pure and genuine workings of the Spirit there: how then shall the Christian which is (comparatively) negligent and remiss about heart-work, be ever able to discover it? Sincerity which is the *quæsitum*, the thing sought for, lies in the heart like a small piece of Gold in the bottom of a River, he that will find it must stay till the water be clear and settled, and then he shall see it sparkling at the bottom; and that the heart may be clear and setled, how much pains and watching care and diligence will it cost?

2. God doth not usually indulge lazy and negligent Souls with the Comforts of Assurance, he will not so much as seem to patronize sloth and carelesness, he will give it, but it shall be in his own way: his Command hath united our care and comfort together; they are mistaken that think the beautiful Child of Assurance may be born without pangs: Ah, how many solitary hours have the people of God spent in heart-examination? How many times have they looked into the Word, and then into their hearts? Sometime they thought they discovered sincerity, and

were

were even ready to draw forth the triumphant conclusion of Assurance, then comes a doubt they cannot resolve, and dashes all again; many hopes and fears, doubtings and reasonings they have had in their own breasts, before they arrived at a comfortable settlement.

To conclude, Suppose it possible for a careless Christian to attain Assurance, yet it's impossible he should long retain it; for it is with those whose hearts are big with the joys of Assurance, as with a pregnant woman subject to miscarriages; if extraordinary care be not used, it is a thousand to one if ever she imbrace a living Child: So 'tis here, a little pride, vanity, carelessness, dashes all that for which thou hast been labouring a long time in many a weary duty. Since then the joy of our life, the comfort of our souls, rises and falls with our diligence in this work; keep your hearts with all diligence.

5. The improvement of our Graces depends on the keeping of our hearts; I never knew Grace thrive in a negligent and careless Soul; the habits and roots of grace are planted in the heart; and the deeper they are radicated there, the more thriving and flourishing grace is: in *Eph.*

3. 17. we read of *being rooted in Grace:* Grace in the heart is the root of every gracious word in the mouth, and of every holy work in the hand, *Pſal.* 116. 10. 2 *Cor.* 4. 13. 'tis true, Chriſt is the root of a Chriſtian; but Chriſt is *Origo originans*, the originating root and grace, *Origo originata*, a root originated, planted, and influenced by Chriſt, according as this thrives under divine influences, ſo the acts of grace are more or leſs fruitful and vigorous: Now in a heart not kept with care and diligence, theſe fructifying influences are ſtopt and cut off, multitudes of vanities break in upon it, and devour its ſtrength; the heart is as it were the paſture, in which multitudes of thoughts are fed every day; a gracious heart diligently kept, feeds many precious thoughts of God in a day, *Pſal.* 139. 17. *How precious are thy thoughts to me O God! how great is the ſum of them! if I ſhould count them, they are more in number than the ſand; and when I awake, I am ſtill with thee.* And as the gracious heart feeds and nouriſhes them, ſo they refreſh and feaſt the heart, *Pſal.* 63. 5, 6. *My ſoul is filled as with marrow and fatneſs whileſt I think upon thee, &c.* But in the diſ-regarded heart, ſwarms of vain and fooliſh

thoughts are perpetually working, and juſtle out thoſe ſpiritual Idea's and thoughts of God, by which the Soul ſhould be refreſhed.

Beſides, the careleſs heart makes nothing out of any Duty or Ordinance it performs or attends on, and yet theſe are the Conduits of Heaven from whence Grace is watred and made fruitful: a man may go with an heedleſs ſpirit from Ordinance to Ordinance, abide all his dayes under the choiceſt teachings, and yet never be improved by them; for heart neglect is a leak in the bottom, no heavenly influences how rich ſoever, abide in that Soul, *Matth.* 13. 3, 4. The heart that lies open and common like the high-way, free for all paſſengers; when the Seed fell on it, the fowls came and devoured it. Alas! it is not enough to hear, unleſs we take heed how we hear: a man may pray, and never the better, unleſs he watch unto prayer. In a word, all Ordinances, Means and Duties are bleſſed unto the improvement of Grace, according to the care and ſtrictneſs we uſe in keeping our hearts in them.

6. Laſtly, The ſtability of our Souls in the hour of temptation, will be much according

according to the care and Conscience we have of keeping our hearts; the careless heart is an easy prey to Satan in the hour of temptation, his main Batteries are raised against that Fort-royal, the Heart; if he win that, he wins all, for it commands the whole man; and alas, how easy a Conquest is a neglected heart? 'tis no more difficult to surprise it, than for an enemy to enter that City, whose Gates are open and unguarded: 'tis the watchful heart that discovers and suppresses the temptation before it come to its strength. Divines observe this to be the method in which temptations are ripened and brought to their full strength; there is (1) The irritation of the Object, or that power it hath to work upon and provoke our corrupt nature, which is either done by the real presence of the object, or else by Speculation, when the object (though absent) is held out by the phantasy before the Soul. (2) Then follows the motion of the sensitive appetite, which is stirred and provoked by the phantasy, representing it as a sensual good, as having profit or pleasure in it. (3) Then there is a consultation in the mind a-

ὄρεξις

ὁρμη

Βούλησις

bout it, deliberating about the likeliest means of accomplishing it. (4) Next follows the election or choice of the Will. (5) And lastly, The desire or full engagement of the Will to it; all this may be done in a few moments, for the debates of the Soul are quick, and soon ended: when it comes thus far, then the heart is won, Satan hath entred victoriously, and displayed his Colours upon the Walls of that Royal Fort; but had the Heart been well guarded at first, it had never come to this height; the temptation had been stopt in the first or second act; and indeed there it's stopt easily, for it is in the motions of a tempted Soul to sin; as in the motion of a stone falling from the brow of an Hill, it's easily stopt at first, but when once it's set a going *Vires acquirit eundo*: and therefore it's the greatest wisdom in the world to observe the first motions of the heart, to check and stop sin there: the motions of sin are weakest at first; a little care and watchfulness may prevent much mischief now, which the careless heart not heeding, is brought within the power of temptation; as the *Syrians* were brought

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brought blindfold into the midst of *Samaria*, before they knew where they were.

By this time Reader, I hope thou art fully satisfied how consequential and necessary a work the keeping of thy heart is, it being a duty that wraps up so many dear interests of the Soul in it.

3. Next, according to the method propounded, I proceed to point out those special Seasons in the life of a Christian, which require and call for our utmost diligence in keeping the heart: for though (as was observed before) the Duty binds *ad semper*, and there be no time or condition of life in which we may be excused from this work; yet there are some signal seasons, critical hours, requiring more than a common vigilance over the heart.

And the first,

1. *Season.* "Is the time of pro-"sperity, when Providence smiles "upon us, and dandles us upon her "knee. Now Christian, keep thy "heart with all diligence; for now "'twill be exceeding apt to grow secure, "proud and earthly, *Rara virtus est hu-"militas honorata* (saith *Bernard*) to see "a man humble under prosperity, is one "of

" of the greateſt rarities in the World.
" Even a good *Hezekiah* could not hide
" a vain glorious temper, under this tem-
" ptation, and hence that Caution to
" *Iſrael* Deut. 6. 10, 11, 12. *and it ſhall*
" *be when the Lord thy God ſhall have*
" *brought thee into the land which he ſware*
" *to thy fathers, to* Abraham, Iſaac *and* Ja-
" cob, *to give thee great and goodly Cities*
" *which thou buildeſt not. and houſes full of*
" *all good things which thou filledſt not*, &c.
" *Then beware leſt thou forget the Lord*,
" and indeed ſo it fell out, *for* Jeſurun
" *waxed fat and kicked*, Deut. 32. 15.

Now then, the firſt caſe will be this, *viz.*

1. Caſe. *How a Chriſtian may keep his heart from pride and carnal ſecurity under the ſmiles of providence, and confluence of Creature comforts?*

There are ſeven choice helps to ſecure the heart from the dangerous ſnares of proſperity, the firſt is this.

1. *To conſider the dangerous inſnaring temptations attending a pleaſant and proſperous Condition: few, yea very few of thoſe that live in the pleaſures and proſperity of this world, eſcape everlaſting perdition*, Matth. 19. 24. *'tis eaſier* (ſaith Chriſt) *for a Camel to paſs through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of*

Heaven,

Heaven, and 1 Cor. 1. 26. *not many mighty, not many noble are called.* It might justly make us tremble when the Scripture tells us in general, that few shall be saved, much more when it tells us, that of that rank and sort of which we are, but few shall be saved. When *Joshuah* called all the Tribes of *Israel* to lot upon them for the discovery of *Achan*, doubtless *Achan* feared; when the Tribe of *Judah* was taken, his fear increased; but when the family of the *Zarhites* was taken, it was time then to tremble. So when the Scripture comes so near us as to tell us that of such a sort of men very few shall escape, 'tis time to look about: *miror si potest servari aliquis rectorum*, saith *Chrisostome*, I should wonder if any of the *Rulers* be saved. Oh how many have been Coached to Hell in the Chariots of earthly pleasures, whilest others have been whipt to Heaven by the rod of affliction? How few like the daughter of *Tyre* come to Christ with a gift! how few among the rich intreat his favour.

2. *It may yet keep us more humble and watchful in prosperity, if we consider that among Christians many have been much the worse for it*; How good had it been for some of them if they had never known

prosperity: when they were in a low condition, how humble spiritual and heavenly were they; but when advanced, what an apparent alteration hath been upon their spirits; 'twas so with *Israel* when they were in a low condition in the Wilderness; then *Israel* was, *Holiness to the Lord*, *Jer.* 2. 23. but when they came into *Canaan* and were fed in a fat pasture, then, *We are Lords, we will come no more unto thee*, ver. 31. outward gains are ordinarily attended with inward losses, as in a low condition, their civil imployments were wont to have a tang and savour of their duties, so in an exalted condition, their Duties commonly have a tang of the World. He indeed is rich in Grace, whose Graces are not hindred by his Riches, there are but few *Jehosaphats* in the World, of whom its said 2 *Chron.* 17. 5,6. *He had silver and gold in abundance, and his heart was lifted up in the way of Gods commands*: Will not this keep thy Heart humble in prosperity, to think how dear many godly men have paid for their Riches, that through them they have lost that which all the World cannot purchase: Then in the next place,

3. Keep down thy vain heart by this Con-

Conſideration, *That God values no man a jot the more for theſe things.* God values no man by outward excellencies but by inward Graces, they are the internal ornaments of the Spirit, which are of great price in Gods eyes, 1 *Pet.* 3. 4 he deſpiſes all worldly glory and accepts no mans perſon *but in every Nation, he that feareth God and worketh righteouſneſs, is accepted of him*, Acts 10. 35. Indeed if the Judgment of God went by the ſame rule that mans doth, we might value our ſelves by theſe things, and ſtand upon them: but as one ſaid (when dying) I ſhall not appear before God as a *Doctor*, but as a *man*; *tantus quiſquis eſt, quantus eſt apud Deum.* So much every man is, and no more, as he is in the judgement of God. Doth thy heart yet ſwell? and will neither of the former conſiderations keep it humble.

4. Then Fourthly, Conſider *how bitterly many perſons have bewailed their folly when they came to dye, that ever they ſet their hearts upon theſe things, and heartily wiſh, that they had never known them.* What a ſad ſtory was that of *Pius Quintus*, who dying, cryed out deſpairingly, when I was in a low condition, I had ſome hopes of Salvation, but when I was advanced

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to be a *Cardinal*, I greatly doubted it, but since I came to the Popedome, I have no hope at all. Mr. *Spencer* also tells us a real, but sad story, of a rich oppressour, who had scraped up a great estate for his only Son; when he came to dye, he called his Son to him, and said, Son, do you indeed love me? the Son answered, That nature, besides his paternal indulgence, obliged him to that; then said the Father express it by this, hold thy finger in the Candle as long as I am saying a *Pater noster*; the Son attempted, but could not endure it; upon that the Father brake out into these expressions, Thou canst not suffer the burning of thy finger for me, but to get this wealth, I have hazarded my soul for thee, and must burn body and soul in Hell for thy sake, thy pains would have been but for a moment, but mine will be unquenchable fire.

5. The Heart may be kept humble by considering *of what a clogging nature earthly things are to a soul heartily engaged in the way to Heaven*, they shut out much of Heaven from us at present, though they may not shut us out of Heaven at last. If thou consider thy self under the notion of a stranger in this world, travel-

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ing for Heaven, and seeking a better Country, thou hast then as much reason to be taken and delighted with these things, as a weary Horse hath with a heavy Cloakbag: there was a serious truth in that Atheistical scoff of *Julian*, when he took away the Christians estates and told them, it was to make them fitter for the Kingdome of Heaven.

6 Is thy Spirit for all this flatulent and lofty, then urge upon it *the consideration of that awful day of reckoning, wherein according to our receipts of Mercies shall be our accompts for them*: And methinks this should awe, and humble the vainest heart that ever was in the breast of a Saint. Know for certain, that the Lord records all the mercies that ever he gave thee, from the beginning, to the end of thy life, *Micah 6. 5. Remember O my people, from Shittim unto Gilgal*, &c. Yea, they are exactly numbred, and recorded, in order to an account; and thy account will be suitable, *Luke 12. 48. To whomsoever much is given, of him much shall be required.* You are but Stewards, and your Lord will come to take an account of you; and what a great account have you to make who have much of this world in your hands; what swift

witnesses

witneſſes will your mercies be againſt you, if this be the beſt fruit of them?

7. It is a very humbling conſideration, *That the Mercies of God ſhould work otherwiſe upon my Spirit than they uſe to do upon the Spirits of others, to whom they come as ſanctified Mercies from the love of God.* Ah Lord! what a ſad conſideration is this? enough to lay me in the duſt: when I conſider (1) that their mercies have greatly humbled them; the higher God hath raiſed them, the lower they have laid themſelves before God. Thus did *Jacob* when God had given him much ſubſtance, *Gen.* 32. 5, 10. *And Jacob ſaid, I am not worthy of the leaſt of all thy mercies, and all the truth which thou haſt ſhewed thy ſervant; for with my ſtaff I paſſed over this Jordan, and now am become two Bands.* And thus it was with holy *David*, 2 *Sam.* 7. 18. When God had confirmed the Promiſe to him, to build him an houſe, and not reject him as he did *Saul*, he goes in before the Lord and ſaith, *who am I? and what is my Fathers houſe, that thou haſt brought me hitherto?* and ſo indeed God required *Deut.* 26. 5. when *Iſrael* was to bring to God the firſt fruits of *Canaan*, they were to ſay, *A Syrian ready to periſh was my fa-*

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ther, &c. Do others raise God the higher for raising them? and the more God raises me, the more shall I abuse him and exalt my self? Oh what a sad thing is this! (2) others have freely ascribed the glory of all their injoyments to God, and magnified not themselves but him, for their mercies: So *David* 2 Sam. 26. 26. *Let thy name be magnified, and the house of thy servant be established.* He doth not fly upon the mercy, and suck out the sweetness of it, looking no farther than his own comfort; no, he cares for no mercy except God be magnified in it. So *Psal.* 18. 2. when God had delivered him from all his enemies, *the Lord* (saith he) *is my strength, and my rock, he is become my salvation.* They did not put the Crown upon their own heads as I do. (3) The mercies of God have been melting mercies unto others, melting their Souls in love to the God of their mercies. So *Hannah*, 1 *Sam.* 2. 1. when she received the mercy of a Son, my soul (saith she) rejoyceth in the Lord, not in the mercy, but in the God of the mercy: And so *Mary*, *Luke* 1. 46. *My soul doth magnify the Lord, my spirit rejoyceth in God my Saviour*; the word signifies, to make more room for God: Their hearts

were

were not contracted, but the more inlarged to God; (4) the mercies of God have been mighty reſtraints to keep others from ſin. So *Ezra* 9. 13. *Seeing thou our God haſt given us ſuch a deliverance as this, ſhould we again break thy Commandments?* ingenious Souls have felt the force of the obligations of love, and mercy upon them; (5) to conclude, the mercies of God to others have been as oyle to the wheels of their obedience, and made them fitter for ſervice, 2 *Chro.* 17. 5. Now if mercies work contrarily upon my heart, what cauſe have I to be afraid that they come not to me in love? I tell you, this is enough to damp the Spirit of any Saint, to ſee what ſweet effects they have had on others, and what ſad effects on him.

2. *Seaſon.* The ſecond ſpecial Seaſon "in the life of a Chriſtian requiring "more than a common diligence to keep "his heart is *the time of adverſity*; when "providence frowns upon you, and "blaſts your outward comforts, then "look to your hearts, keep them with "all diligence from repining againſt "God, or fainting under his hand; for "troubles, though ſanctified, are trou-"bles ſtill; even ſweet bryar, and ho-

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"ly thistle have their prickles. *Jonah* "was a good man, and yet how pettish "was his heart under affliction? *Job* "was the Mirrour of patience, yet how "was his heart discomposed by trouble? "you will find it as hard to get a com- "posed spirit under great afflictions, as it "is to fix Quicksilver: Oh the hurries "and tumults which they occasion even "in the best hearts! well then, the second "Case will be this.

2. Case. *How a Christian under great afflictions may keep his heart from repining or desponding under the hand of God?* Now there are nine special helps I shall here offer, to keep thy heart in this condition; and the first shall be this, To work upon your hearts this great truth.

1. *That by these cross Providences, God is faithfully pursuing the great design of electing love upon the Souls of his people, and orders all these afflictions as means sanctified to that end.*

Afflictions fall not out by *Casualty*, but by *Counsel. Job* 5. 6. *Eph.* 1. 11. by this Counsel of God they are ordained as means of much spiritual good to Saints, *Isai.* 27 9. *By this shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, &c.* Heb. 12. 10. *But he for our profit, &c.* Rom. 8. 28. *all things work together*

gether for good, they are Gods workmen upon our hearts, to pull down the pride and carnal security of them; and being so, their nature is changed; they are turned into blessings and benefits, *Psal.* 119 71 *It is good for me that I have been afflicted.* And sure then, thou hast no reason to quarrel with, but rather to admire that God should concern himself so much in thy good, to use any means for the accomplishing of it, *Philip.* 3.11. *Paul could bless God if by any means he might attain the resurrection of the dead*, my brethren (saith *James*, *count it all joy when you fall into divers temptations*, 1 *Jam.* 2.3. My father is about a design of love upon my soul, and do I well to be angry with him? all that he doth is in pursuance of, and reference to some eternal glorious ends upon my Soul. O 'tis my ignorance of Gods design, that makes me quarrel with him! he saith to thee in this case, as to *Peter*, *What I do thou knowest not now, but hereafter thou shalt know it.*

2. Help. *Though God hath reserved to himself a liberty of afflicting his people, yet he hath tyed up his own hands by promise, never to take away his loving kindness from them.* Can I look that Scripture in the face

face with a repining discontented spirit, 2 *Sam* 7. 14. *I will be his father, and he shall be my Son; if he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men: nevertheless my mercy shall not depart away from him.* O my heart, my naughty heart; dost thou well to be discontented, when God hath given thee, the whole tree with all the clusters of comfort growing on it; because he suffers the wind to blow down a few leaves? Christians have two sorts of goods, the goods of the throne, and the goods of the foot stoole; moveables and immoveables; if God have secured these, never let my heart be troubled at the loss of those: indeed, if he had cut off his love, or discovenanted my Soul, I had reason to be cast down; but this he hath not, he cannot do.

3. *Help.* It is of marvellous efficacy to keep the heart from sinking under affliction, *to call to mind; that thine own father hath the ordering of them*: not a Creature moves hand or tongue against thee, but by his permission. Suppose the cup be a bitter cup, yet 'tis the cup which thy Father hath given thee to drink, and canst thou suspect poison to be in that cup, which he delivers thee? foolish man,

put home the caſe to thine own heart, conſult with thine own bowels; canſt thou find in thy heart to give thy Child, that which would hurt, and undoe him? no, thou wouldſt as ſoon hurt thy ſelf as him; *If thou then being evil knoweſt how to give good gifts to thy children,* how much more doth God, *Math.* 7. 11. the very conſideration of his nature, a God of love, pity and tender mercies, or of his relation to thee, as a father, husband, friend; might be ſecurity enough, if he had not ſpoken a word, to quiet thee in this caſe: and yet you have his word too, *Jer.* 25. 6. *I will doe you no hurt.* You lye too near his heart to hurt you, nothing grieves him more than your groundleſs and unworthy ſuſpicions of his deſigns doe; would it not grieve a faithful tender hearted Phyſician, when he hath ſtudied the caſe of his Patient, prepared the moſt excellent receipts to ſave his life, to hear him cry out; Oh he hath undone me, he hath poiſoned me; becauſe it gripes and pains him in the operation? O when will you be ingenious!

4. Help. *God reſpects you as much in a low, as in a high condition; and therefore it need not ſo much trouble you to be made low;* nay, to ſpeak home, he manifeſts more

of

of his love, grace, and tenderneſs, in the time of affliction than proſperity: as God did not at firſt chuſe you becauſe you were high, ſo he will not forſake you becauſe you are low: men may look ſhie upon you, and alter their reſpects as your condition is altered: when providence hath blaſted your eſtates, your ſummer friends may grow ſtrange, as fearing you may be troubleſom to them, but will God doe ſo? No, no, *I will never leave thee nor forſake thee, Heb.* 13. 5. indeed if adverſity and poverty could bar you from acceſs to God, it were a ſad condition; but you may go to God as freely as ever, *my God* (ſaith the Church) *will hear me, Micah* 7. poore *David*, when ſtript out of all earthly comforts, could yet incourage himſelf in the Lord his God, and why cannot you? Suppoſe your husband or child had loſt all at Sea, and ſhould come to you in raggs; could you deny the relation? or refuſe to entertain him? if you would not; much leſs will God: Why then are you ſo troubled? though your condition be changed, your fathers love and reſpects are not changed.

5. Help. *And what if by the loſs of outward comforts, God will preſerve your Souls*

from the ruining power of temptation; sure then, you have little cause to sink your hearts; by such sad thoughts about them. Are not these earthly injoyments, the things that make men shrink and warp in times of tryal; for the love of these many have forsaken Christ in such an hour, *Matth.* 19. 22. he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions: and if this be Gods design; what have I done in quarrelling with him about it. We see Marriners in a storm, can throw over board rich bayles of silk, and precious things, to preserve the vessel and their lives with it, and every one saith, they act prudently; we know 'tis usual for Souldiers in a Citty besieged, to batter down or burn, the fairest buildings without the walls in which the enemy may shelter in the siege; and no man doubts but 'its wisely done: such as have gangrened leggs or arms, can willingly stretch them out to be cut off, and not only thank, but pay the Chirurgion for his pains; and must God only be repined at? for cutting over what would sink you in a storm? or pulling down that which would advantage your enemy in the siege of temptation; for cutting off what would endanger your everlasting life? O inconsiderate, ingrateful

grateful man! are not theſe things for which thou grieveſt, the very things that have ruined thouſands of Souls? well, what Chriſt doth in this, thou knoweſt not now; but hereafter thou mayeſt.

6. *Help.* It would much ſtay the heart under adverſity to conſider, *that God by ſuch humbling providences, may be accompliſhing that, for which you have long prayed, and waited*; and ſhould you be troubled at that: ſay Chriſtian, haſt thou not many prayers depending before God upon ſuch accounts as theſe; that he would keep thee from ſin; diſcover to thee the emptineſs and inſufficiency of the Creature? that he would kill and mortifie thy luſts, that thy heart may never find reſt in any injoyment but Chriſt? why now, by ſuch humbling and impoveriſhing ſtrokes, God may be fulfilling thy deſire: wouldſt thou be kept from ſin? lo, *he hath hedged up thy way with thorns*: Wouldſt thou ſee the creatures vanity; thy affliction is a fair glaſs to diſcover it; for the vanity of the creature is never ſo effectually and ſenſibly diſcovered, as in our own experience of it: wouldſt thou have thy corruptions mortified? this is the way: Now God takes away the food and fewel that maintain'd them; for as

proſperity begat and fed them, ſo adverſity when ſanctified is a means to kill them. Wouldſt thou have thy heart to reſt no where but in the boſom of God? what better way canſt thou imagine providence ſhould take to accompliſh thy deſire, than by pulling from under thy head, that ſoft pillow of creature delights on which thou reſtedſt before? and yet thou fret at this, peeviſh child how doſt thou exerciſe thy Fathers patience! if he delay to anſwer thy prayers, thou art ready to ſay he regards thee not; if he doe that which really anſwers the ſcope and main end of them, but not in the way thou expectedſt, thou quarrelleſt with him for that; as if inſtead of anſwering he were croſſing all thy hopes and aimes: is this ingenious? is it not enough that God is ſo gracious to doe what thou deſireſt, but thou muſt be ſo impudent to exſpect he ſhould doe it in the way which thou preſcribeſt?

7. *Help.* Again it may ſtay thy heart, if thou conſider; *That in theſe troubles, God is about that work, which if thou didſt ſee the deſign of, thy Soul would rejoyce.* We poor creatures are bemiſted with much ignorance, and are not able to diſcern, how particular providences work towards

towards Gods end; and therefore like *Iſrael* in the wilderneſs are often murmuring becauſe providence leads us about in a howling deſart, where we are expoſed to ſtraits; though yet, then he led them, and is now leading us, *by the right way, to a City of habitations:* if you could but ſee how God in his ſecret Counſel hath exactly laid, the whole plot and deſign of thy ſalvation; even to the ſmalleſt means and circumſtances, this way, and by theſe means; ſuch a one ſhall be ſaved, and by no other; ſuch a number of afflictions I appoint for this man, at this time, and in this order; they ſhall befall him, thus, and thus they ſhall work for him; could you I ſay but diſcern the admirable harmony of divine diſpenſations, their mutual relations to each other; together with the general reſpect and influence, they all have into the laſt end; of all the conditions in the world, you would chuſe that you are now in; had you liberty to make your own choice. Providence is like a curious piece of Arras, made up of a thouſand ſhreds; which ſingle we know not what to make of, but put together and ſlicht up orderly they repreſent a beautiful hiſtory to the eye: as God works

all things according to the counſel of his own will, So that counſel of God hath ordained this, as the beſt way to bring about thy ſalvation: ſuch a one hath a proud heart, ſo many humbling providences I appoint for him, ſuch a one an earthly heart; ſo many impoveriſhing providences for him: Did you but ſee this, I need ſay no more to ſupport the moſt dejected heart.

8. *Help.* Farther, it would much conduce to the ſettlement of your hearts to conſider, *that by fretting and diſcontent, you do your ſelves more injury, than all the afflictions you lye under could doe*; Your own diſcontent is that which arms your troubles with a ſting, 'tis you that make your burthen heavy; by ſtrugling under it: could you but lye quiet under the hand of God, your condition would be much eaſier, and ſweeter than it is: *impatiens agrotus crudelem facit Medicum.* This makes God lay on more ſtrokes, as a Father will upon a ſtubborn child, that receives not correction.

Beſides, it unfits the Soul to pray over its troubles; or take in the ſence of that good which God intends by them: Affliction is a pill which being wrapt up in patience, and quiet ſubmiſſion, may be eaſily

easily swallowed; but discontent chews the pill, and so imbitters the Soul: God throws away some comfort which he saw would hurt you, and you will throw away your peace after it; he shoots an arrow which sticks in your cloaths, and was never intended to hurt, but only to fright you from sin: and you will thrust it onward to the piercing of your very hearts; by despondency, and discontent.

9. *Help.* Lastly, if all this will not do, but thy heart (like *Rachel*) still refuses to be comforted, or quieted, then consider one thing more; which if seriously pondered, will doubtless do the work; and that is this: *compare the condition thou art now in (and art so much dissatisfied with) with that condition others are, and thy self deservest to be in*: Others are roaring in flames, howling under the scourge of vengeance, and amongst them I deserve to be. O my Soul! is this hell? is my condition as bad as the damned? O what would thousands now in Hell, give to change conditions with me? It is a famous instance which *Doctor Tayler* gives us of the *Duke* of *Condey*, I have read (saith he) that when the Duke of *Condey* had entred voluntarily into the incommodities of a religious poverty, *Great Exemp.* p. 310.

poverty, he was one day espied and pityed by a Lord of *Italy*, who out of tenderness wished him, to be more careful and nutritive of his person: the good Duke answered, Sir, be not troubled; and think not that I am ill provided of conveniences: for I send an *harbinger* before me, who makes ready my lodgings, and takes care that I be royally entertained. The Lord asked him, who was his *harbinger?* he answered, the knowledge of my self, and the consideration of what I deserve for my sins, which is eternal torments; and when with this knowledge I arrive at my lodging, how unprovided soever I find it; me thinks it is ever better then I deserve. *Why doth the living man complain?* and thus the heart may be kept from desponding or repining under adversity.

3. *Season.* The third Season calling "for more than ordinary dilligence to "keep the heart is, the time of Sions "trouble: when the Church like the ship "in which Christ and his disciples were, "is oppressed, and ready to perish in the "waves of persecution, then good Souls, "are ready to sink and be shipwrackt too "upon the billows of their own fear. I "confess most men rather need the spur

"than

"than the reyns in this caſe, and yet "ſome ſit down as overweighed with "the ſence of the Churches troubles; the "loſs of the *Ark* coſt old *Eli* his life, "the ſad poſture *Jeruſalem* lay in, made "good *Nehemiahs* countenance chang in "the midſt of all the pleaſures and ac- "commodations of the Court *Neh.* 2. 2. "ah this goes cloſe to honeſt hearts!

"But though God allow, yea, com- "mand the moſt awakened apprehen- "ſions of theſe calamities, and in *ſuch a* "*day call to mourning, weeping, and gird-* "*ing with ſackloth, Iſa.* 22. 12. and ſeverely "threatens the inſenſible, *Amos* 6. 1. yet "it will not pleaſe him to ſee you ſit "like penſive *Elijah* under the Juniper "tree, 1 *Kings* 19. 4. *Ah Lord God! it is* "*enough, take away my life alſo:* no, "mourners in *Sion* you may, and ought "to be; but ſelf tormentors you muſt "not be: complain to God you may, "but to complain of God (though but "by an unſuitable carriage and the lan- "guage of your actions) you muſt "not.

3. *Caſe.* The third Caſe that comes next to be ſpoken to is this, *How publick and tender hearts may be relieved and ſupported when they are even overweighed with the*

the burdenſom ſence of Sions troubles? "I "grant, it is hard for him that prefer- "reth *Sion* to his chief joy, to keep "his heart that it ſink not below the "due ſence of its troubles; and yet this "ought and may be done by the uſe "of ſuch heart eſtabliſhing directions as "theſe.

1. Direct. *Settle this great truth in your hearts, that no trouble befalls Sion, but by the permiſſion of Sions God; and he permits nothing out of which he will not bring much good at laſt to his people.*

There is as truly a principle of quietneſs in the *permitting*, as in the *commanding* will of God. See it in *David* 2 *Sam.* 16. 10. *let him alone, it may be God hath bidden him, and in Chriſt*, John 19.11. *thou couldſt have no power againſt me, except it were given thee from above*, it ſhould much calm our ſpirits, that it is the will of God to ſuffer it; and had not he ſuffered it, it could never have been as it is.

This very conſideration quieted *Job*, *Eli*, *David*, & *Hezekiah*, that the Lord did it, was enough to them: and why ſhould it not be ſo to us? if the Lord will have Sion plowed as a field, and her goodly ſtones lye in the duſt; if it be his pleaſure that *Antichriſt* ſhall rage yet longer, and

wear

wear out the Saints of the most high; if it be his will, that a day of trouble and of treading down, and of perplexity by the Lord God of hosts shall be upon the valley of vision, that the wicked shall devour the man that is more righteous than he, what are we that we should contest with God? fit it is, that we should be resigned up to that will whence we proceeded; and he that made us should dispose of us as he pleaseth: he may doe what seemeth him good without our consent: doth poor man stand upon equal ground, that he should capitulate with his Creator, or that God should render him an account of any of his matters? it's every way as reasonable we be content however God dispose of us, as that we be obedient to what ever he commands us.

But then, if we persue this argument further, by considering that Gods permissions do all meet at last in the real good of his people, this will much more quiet our spirits. Do the enemies carry away the good figgs, even the best among the people into captivity? this looks like a sad providence: but yet, God sends them thither for their good *Jer.* 24.5. doth God take the *Assyrian* as a staffe

staffe in his hand to beat his people with? those blows are smart, and make them cry; but the end of his so doing is, *that he may accomplish his whole work upon Mount Sion, Isa.* 10. 12. If God can bring much good out of the worst, and greatest evil of sin; much more out of temporal afflictions, and it is as evident that he will, as that he can do so. For it is inconsistent with the wisdome of a common Agent, to permit any thing (which he might prevent if he pleased) to cross his great design and end; and can it be imagined that the most wise God should do so.

Well then, as *Luther* told *Melanchon*, *desinat Philippus esse rector mundi*: so say I to you, let infinite wisdom, power and love alone; for by these, all Creatures are swayed, and actions guided, in reference to the Church. Its none of our work to rule the World, but to submit to him that doth, *non caco impetu volvuntur rota*, the motions of Providence are all judicious, the Wheels are full of eyes: it is enough, that the affairs of Sion are in a good hand.

2. *Direct.* Ponder this heart-supporting truth, in reference to Sions trouble. *That how many troubles soever are upon her, yet her King is in her.*

What?

What? Hath the Lord forſaken his Churches? hath he ſold them into the enemies hand? Doth he not regard what evil befals them? that our hearts ſink at this rate? Is it not too ſhameful an undervaluing of the great God? and too much magnifying of poor impotent man to fear and tremble at Creatures, whileſt God is in the midſt of us? The Churches enemies are many and mighty, let that be granted; yet that Argument with which *Caleb* and *Joſhua* ſtrove to raiſe their own hearts, is of as much force now as it was then: *The Lord is with us, fear them not, Numb.* 14. 9. The *Hiſtorian* tels us, that when *Antigonus* over-heard his ſouldiers reckoning how many their enemies were, and ſo diſcouraging one another; he ſuddenly ſteps in among them with this Queſtion, *and how many* (ſaid he) *do you reckon me for*? diſcouraged ſouls? how many do you reckon the Lord for? is he not an over-match for all his enemies? is not one Almighty more than many mighties? doth his preſence ſtand for nothing with us? *If God be for us, who can be againſt us? Rom.* 8.31. What think you was the reaſon of that great Exploration *Gideon* made in *Judges* 6. He queſtions verſ. 12. 13. he

deſires

desires a sign v. 17. and after that another, v. 36. and what was the end of all this? but that he might be sure the Lord was with him, and that he might but write this Motto upon his Ensign, *The sword of the Lord, and of Gideon.* So then, if you can be well assured, the Lord is with his people, you will get thereby above all your discouragements: and that he is so, you need not (with him) desire a sign from Heaven, lo, you have a sign before you, even their marvellous preservation amidst all their enemies. If God be not with his people, how is it they are not swallowed up quick? Do their enemies want malice, power, or opportunity? no, but there is an invisible hand upon them. Well then, as it is *Exod.* 33. 14. Let his presence give us rest; and though the Mountains be hurled into the Sea, though Heaven and Earth mingle together; fear not, God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved.

3. Direct. *Ponder the great advantages attending the people of God in an afflicted condition.* If a low and an afflicted state in the World be really evil for the Church, then your dejections are not only irrational, but ungrateful: indeed, if ye estimate the happiness of the Church by its worldly

worldly eaſe, ſplendor and proſperity, then ſuch times will ſeem bad for it; but if you reckon its glory to conſiſt in its humility, faith, patience and heavenly mindedneſs, no condition in the World abounds with advantages for theſe as an afflicted condition doth. It was not perſecutions and priſons, but worldlineſs and wantonneſs that was the poyſon of the Church; neither was it the earthly glory of its *Profeſſors*, but the bloud of its *Martyrs* that was the ſeed of the Church. The power of godlineſs did never thrive better than in *affliction*, and never ran lower than in times of greateſt *proſperity*; when *we are left a poor and an afflicted people, then we learn to truſt in the Name of the Lord, Zeph.* 3. 12. What ſay ye Sirs? Is it indeed for the Saints advantage to be weaned from the loves and delights of enſnaring worldly vanities? to be quickned and prickt forward with more haſte to Heaven, to have clearer diſcoveries of their own hearts, to be taught to pray more fervently, frequently, ſpiritually to look and long for the Reſt to come, more ardently? if this be for their advantage, experience teacheth us, that no condition is ordinarily bleſt with ſuch fruits as theſe, like an afflicted Condition.

And is it well done then to repine and droop because your father consults more the advantage of your souls, than the pleasing of your humours? because he will bring you a nearer way to Heaven than you are willing to go? Is this a due requital of his love, who is pleased so much to concern himself in your welfare? which is more than he will do for thousands in the World, upon whom he will not lay a Rod, or spend an affliction for their good, *Hos.* 4. 17. *Matth.* 15. 14. But alas! We judge by sense, and reckon things good or evil, according to what we for the present can taste and feel in them.

4. Direct. *Take heed that you overlook not the many precious mercies which the people of God enjoy amidst all their trouble.*

'Tis pity that our tears upon the account of our troubles, should so blear and blind our eyes, that we should not see our mercies and grounds of comfort. I will not insist upon the mercy of having your lives given you for a prey, nor yet upon the many outward comforts, temporal conveniences, and accommodations, which you enjoy even above what Christ and his precious servants, of whom the world was not worthy, ever had.

But

But what say you to pardon of sin? interest in Christ? the Covenant of Promises? and an eternity of happiness in the presence of God after a few dayes are over? O that ever a people intitled to such mercies as these, should droop under any temporal affliction, or be so much concerned for the frowns of men, and loss of trifles! You have not the smiles of great men, but you have the favour of the great God: You are it may be cast back in your estates, but thereby farthered in spirituals. You cannot live so bravely, plentifully, and easily as before, but still you may live as holy and heavenly as ever. Will you then grieve so much for these *circumstantials*, as to forget your *substantials*? shall light troubles make you forget weighty mercies? Remember the Churches true Riches are laid out of the reach of all its enemies: they may make you poor, but not miserable. What though God do not distinguish in his outward Dispensations betwixt his own and others? yea, what though his Judgments single out the best, and spare the worst? what though an *Abel* be killed in love, and a *Cain* survive in hatred, a bloody *Dionysius* die in his bed, and a good *Josiah* fall in Battel? What

though the belly of the wicked be filled with hid Treaſures, and the teeth of the Saints broken with Gravel-ſtones, yet ſtill here is much matter of praiſe: for electing Love hath diſtinguiſhed, though common Providence did not, and whileſt proſperity and impunity ſlay the wicked, even ſlaying and adverſity ſhall benefit and ſave the righteous.

5. Direct. *Believe, that how low ſoever the Church be plunged under the waters of adverſity, it ſhall aſſuredly riſe again.* Fear not, for as ſure as Chriſt aroſe the third day, notwithſtanding the Seal and Watch that was upon him; ſo ſure the Church ſhall ariſe out of all her troubles, and lift up its victorious head above all its enemies: there's no fear of ruining that people that thrive by their loſſes, and multiply by being diminiſhed. O be not too quick to bury the Church before ſhe be dead! ſtay till Chriſt hath tryed his skill before you give it up for loſt; the Buſh may be all in a flame, but ſhall never be conſumed, and that becauſe of the good will of him that dwelleth in the Buſh.

6. Direct. *Record the famous inſtances of Gods care and tenderneſs over his people in former ſtraits.* Chriſt hath not ſuffered

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it to be devoured yet, for above these 1600 years the Christian Church hath lived in affliction, and yet it is not consumed: many a wave of persecution hath gone over it, and yet it is not drowned; many designs to ruine it, and hitherto none hath prospered: this is not the first time that *Hamans* and *Achitophels* have plotted its ruine; that an *Herod* hath stretcht out his hand to vex it. Still it hath been preserved from, supported under, or delivered out of all its troubles: and is it not as dear to God as ever? is not he as able to save it now as formerly? though we know not whence deliverance should arise, *Yet the Lord knoweth how to deliver the Godly out of temptations*, 2 Pet. 2. 9.

7. *Direct.* If you can fetch no comfort from any of the former arguments, then in the last place, *try whether you cannot draw some comfort out of your very trouble.* Surely this trouble of yours is a good argument of your integrity; union is the ground of sympathy, if you had not some rich adventure in that ship, you would not tremble as you do when it is in danger: besides, this frame of spirit may afford you this argument, that if you be so sensible of the Churches troubles,

Jesus Christ is much more sensible of, and sollicitous about it than you can be; and he will cast an eye of favour upon them that mourn for it, *Isa.* 57. 18.

4. *Season.* "The fourth special Season "of expressing our utmost diligence in "keeping our hearts is the time of dan- "ger and publick distraction: in such "times the best hearts are but too apt to "be surprised by slavish fear, it is not "easy to secure the heart against *distra-* "*ction* in times of common *destruction*: "if *Syria* be confederate with *Ephraim*, "how do the hearts of the house of *Da-* "*vid* shake, even as the trees of the wood "which are shaken with the wind *Isa.* 7. "2. when there are ominous signs in the "heavens, on the earth distress of Na- "tions, with perplexity; the Sea and "waves roaring, then the hearts of men "fail for fear, and for looking after those "things which are comming on the earth "*Luke* 21. 25, 26. even a *Paul* himself "may *sometimes complain of fightings* "*within, when there are fears without*, "2 *Cor.* 7. 5.

But my Brethren, these things ought not to be so; Saints should be of a more raised Spirit: so was *David* when his heart was kept in a good frame, *Psal.* 27. 1.

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The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid: let none but the *servants* of *sin* be the *slaves* of *fear*, let them that have delighted in evil, fear evil, *impius tantum metuit, quantum nocuit.* O let not that which God hath threatned as a Judgment upon the wicked, ever seize upon the breasts of the righteous; *I will send* (saith God) *faintness into their hearts in the land of their enemies, and the sound of a shaking leaf shall chase them*, Lev. 26. 36. O what poor spirited men were these, to fly at a shaking leaf! which makes a pleasant, and not a terrible noise, and is in it self a kind of natural musick; but to a guilty Conscience, the whistling leaves are Drums and Trumpets: *but God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of love, and of a sound mind*, 2 *Tim.* 1. 7. A sound mind as it stands there in opposition to the spirit of fear, is an unwounded Conscience, not infirm'd by guilt: and this should make a man as bold as a Lyon. I know it cannot be said of a Saint, what God spake of *Leviathan*, that he is made without fear: there is a natural fear in every man, and it's as impossible to be wholly put off, as the body it self is: *'tis a per-*

turbation of the mind, rising from the apprehension of approaching danger; and as long as dangers can approach us, we shall find some perturbations within us. 'Tis not my purpose to commend to you a *Stoical apathy*, nor yet to take you off from such a degree of cautional preventive fear as may fit you for troubles, and be serviceable to your souls. There is a provident fear that opens our eyes to foresee danger and quickens to a prudent and lawful use of means to prevent it; Such was *Jacobs* fear, *Gen.* 32.7, 9, 10, *&c.* but it is the *fear of diffidence*. I perswade you to keep your hearts from that Tyrannical passion which invades the heart in times of danger, distracts, weakens, and unfits the heart for duty, drives men upon unlawful means, and brings a snare with it. Well then, *the fourth Case will be this.*

4. Case. "*How a Christian may keep his* "*heart from distracting and tormenting* "*fears in times of great and threatning dan-* "*gers.*

Now there are fourteen excellent Rules or helps for the keeping of the heart from sinful fear when eminent dangers threaten us: and the first is this,

1. Rule. *Look upon all the Creatures as*

in

in the hand of God, who manages them in all their motions; limiting, restraining, and determining them all at his pleasure.

Get this great truth well settled by faith in your hearts; it will marvellously guard them against slavish fears, the 1. of *Ezek.* contains an admirable *scheam* or *draught* of Providence; there you may see the living Creatures who move the wheels, *viz.* the great Affairs and turnings of things here below, coming unto Christ, who sits upon the throne to receive new orders and instructions from him, v. 24. 25, 26. and in *Rev.* 6. you read of white, black, and red Horses, which are nothing else but the Instruments which God employs in executing his judgments in the World, as Wars, Pestilence and Death, but when these Horses are pransing and trampling up and down the World; here is that may quiet our hearts, that God hath the reins in his hand. Wicked men are sometimes like mad Horses, they would stamp the people of God under their feet, but that the bridle of Providence is in their lips, *John* 19. 11, 12. A Lion at liberty is terrible to meet, but who is afraid of the Lion in the *Keepers hand.*

2. Rule. *Remember that this God in*

whose

whose hand all the Creatures are, is your Father, and is much more tender over you than you are or can be over your selves: He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of mine eye, Zech. 2. 8. Let me ask the most timerous woman, whether there be not a vast difference betwixt the sight of a drawn sword in the hand of a bloudy Ruffian, and the same sword in the hand of her own tender Husband? as great a difference there is in looking upon Creatures by an eye of sense, and looking on them as in the hand of your God by an eye of Faith; that is a sweet Scripture to this purpose, *Isa.* 54. 5. *Thy Maker is thine Husband, the Lord of Hosts is His Name;* He is Lord of all the Hosts of Creatures in the world: who would be afraid to pass through an Army, though all the Souldiers should turn their Swords and Guns towards him, if the General of that Army were his friend or Father? I have met with an excellent Story of a religious young man, who being at Sea with many other Passengers in a great storm, and they being half dead with fear, he only was observed to be very chearful, as if he had been but little concerned in that danger; one of them demanding a reason of his chearfulness,

Oh,

Oh, said he, *'tis because the Pilot of the ship is my Father.* Consider Christ, first as the King and Supream Lord over the Providential Kingdome, and then as your Head, Husband and Friend, and thou wilt quickly say, *Return unto thy rest, O my soul.* This truth will make you cease trembling, and fall a singing in the midst of dangers, *Psalm* 47. 7. *The Lord is King of all the earth, sing ye praise with understanding,* or as the Hebrew word is, *every one that hath understanding,* viz. of this heart reviving and establishing Doctrine of the Dominion of our Father over all the Creatures.

3. Rule. *Urge upon your hearts the express prohibitions of Christ in this Case; and let your hearts stand in awe of the violations of them.*

He hath charged you not to fear, *Luke* 21. 9. *When ye shall hear of Wars and commotions, see that ye be not terrified.* And *Phil.* 1. 28. *In nothing be terrified by your adversaries:* yea in *Matth.* 10. 26. 28, 31. and within the compass of six verses, our Saviour commands us thrice, *not to fear man.* Doth every big word of proud dust and ashes make thee afraid? doth the voice of a man make thee tremble? and shall not the voice of God? If thou

art

art of such a fearful and timerous spirit, how is it that thou feareſt not to disobey the flat commands of Jesus Christ? Methinks the command of Christ should have as much power to calm, as the voice of a poor worm to terrify thy heart, *Isa.* 51. 12, 13. *I, even I am he that comforteth you, who art thou that thou shouldeſt be afraid of a man that shall dye? and of the son of man that shall be made as the graſs, and forgetteſt the Lord thy maker?* We cannot fear Creatures sinfully till we have forgotten God; did we remember what he is, and what he hath said, we should not be of such feeble spirits: bring thy heart then to this *Dilemma* in times of danger; if I let into my heart the slaviſh fear of man, I muſt let out the reverential awe and fear of God: and dare I caſt off the fear of the Almighty for the frowns of a man? shall I lift up proud duſt above the great God? shall I run upon a certain sin, to shun a probable danger? Oh keep thy heart by that Conſideration.

4. Rule. *Remember how much needleſs trouble your vain fears have brought upon you formerly, and how you have diſquieted your ſelves to no purpoſe.*

Isa. 51. 13. *And haſt feared continually*

ly because of the oppressor, as if he were ready to devour, and where is the fury of the Oppressor? He seem'd ready to devour, but yet you are not devoured; I have not brought upon you the thing that ye feared; You have wasted your spirits, disordered your souls, and weakened your hands, and all this to no purpose. You might have all this while enjoyed your peace, and possessed your souls in patience. And here I cannot but observe a very deep policy of Satan managing a design against the soul by these vain fears: I call them vain in regard of the frustration of them by Providence, but certainly they are not in vain as to the end Satan aims at in raising them, for herein he acts as Souldiers use to do in the Siege of a Garrison, who on purpose to wear out the besieged by constant watchings, and thereby unfit them to make resistance when they storm it in earnest, do every night give them false Allarms, which though they come to nothing, yet do notably serve this further design of the enemy. O when will you beware of Sathans devices?

5. Rule. Consider solemnly, *That though the things you fear should really fall out, yet there is more evil in your own fear than in the thing feared.* And

And that not only as the leaſt evil of ſin, is worſe than the greateſt evil of ſuffering; but as this ſinful fear hath really more torment and trouble in it than is in that condition you are ſo much afraid of, fear is both a multiplying and a tormenting paſſion; it repreſents troubles much greater than they are, and ſo tortures and wracks the Soul much worſe than when the ſuffering it ſelf comes. So it was with *Iſrael* at the red Sea, they cryed out, and were ſore afraid till they put foot into the water, and then a paſſage was opened through thoſe waters which they thought would have drowned them. Thus it is with us, we looking through the glaſs of carnal fear, upon the waters of trouble, the ſwellings of *Jordan*, cry out, Oh they are unfoordable! we muſt needs periſh in them: but when we come into the midſt of thoſe Floods indeed, we find the Promiſe made good, *God will make a way to eſcape*, 1 *Cor.* 10.13. Thus it was with bleſſed *Bilney*, when he would make a tryal by putting his finger to the Candle, and not able to endure that, he cryed out, What? cannot I bear the burning of a finger? how then ſhall I be able to bear the burning of my whole body to morrow? and yet

yet when that morrow came, he could go chearfully into the flames with that Scripture in his mouth, *Isa.* 43. 1, 2, 3. *Fear not, for I have redeemed thee; I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine; when thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, when thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burnt.*

6. Rule. *Consult the many precious promises which are written for your support and comfort in all dangers.*

These are your Refuges to which you may flye and be safe: *when the arrows of danger fly by night, and destruction wasteth at noon day.* There are particular Promises suited to particular Cases and exigencies, and there are general Promises reaching all Cases and Conditions: such are these, *Rom.* 8. 28. *All things shall work together for good, &c.* And *Eccl.* 8. 12. *Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his dayes be prolonged, yet it shall be well with them that fear the Lord, &c. Could you but believe the Promises, your hearts should be established,* 2 Chr. 20. 29. Could you but plead them with God, as *Jacob* did, *Gen.* 32. 12. *Thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, &c.* they would relieve you in every distress.

Object. *But that promise was made personally*

ſonally and by name to him, ſo are not theſe to me.

Anſw. If *Jacobs* God be your God, you have as good an intereſt in them as he had. The Church a thouſand years after that tranſaction betwixt God and *Jacob*, applyed that which God ſpake to him, as if it had been ſpoken to themſelves, *Hoſ.* 12. 1. *He found him in* Bethel, *and there he ſpake with us.*

7. Rule. *Quiet your trembling hearts by recording and conſulting your paſt experiences of the care and faithfulneſs of God in former diſtreſſes.*

Theſe experiences are food for your Faith in a wilderneſs condition, *Pſal.* 74. 14. By this *David* kept his heart in time of danger, 1 *Sam.* 17. 37. and *Paul* his, 2 *Cor.* 1. 10. It was ſweetly anſwered by *Silentiarius*, when one told him, that his enemies way-laid him to take away his life, *Si Deus mei curam non habet, quid vivo?* if God take no care of me, how have I eſcaped hitherto? you may plead with God old experiences to procure new ones, for it is in pleading with God for new deliverances, as it is in pleading for new pardons. Now mark how *Moſes* pleads on that account with God, *Numb.* 14. 19. *Pardon I beſeech thee the Iniquity*

of

of this people, as thou haſt forgiven them from Egypt until now. He doth not ſay as men do, Lord this is the firſt fault, thou haſt not been troubled before to ſign their pardon: but Lord, becauſe thou haſt pardoned them ſo often; I beſeech thee pardon them once again. So in new ſtraits, Lord thou haſt often heard, helpt and ſaved, in former fears, therefore now help again, for with thee there is plenteous redemption, and thine arm is not ſhortned.

8. Rule. *Be well ſatisfied that you are in the way of your duty, and that will beget holy courage in times of danger.*

Who will harm you, if you be followers of that which is good? 1 Pet. 3. 13. Or, if any dare attempt it, *you may boldly commit your ſelves to God in well-doing,* 1 Pet. 4, 19. 'Twas this conſideration that raiſed *Luthers* Spirit above all fear: In the cauſe of God (ſaid he) I ever am, and ever ſhall be ſtout; herein I aſſume this Title, *Ce do nulli,* a good cauſe will bear up a mans ſpirit bravely. Hear the ſaying of a *Heathen* to the ſhame of cowardly *Chriſtians*; *When the Emperour* Veſpaſian *had commanded* Fluidius Priſcus *not to come to the Senate, or if he did, to ſpeak*

Char. of Wiſdom. p. 358.

nothing

nothing but what he would have him; The Senator return'd this noble Answer: *That as he was a Senator, it was fit he should be at the Senate; and if being there he were required to give his advice, he would speak freely that which his Conscience commanded him; the Emperour threatning, that then he should dye.* He answered, *Did I ever tell you that I was immortal? Do you what you will, and I will do what I ought; it is in your power to put me to death unjustly, and in me to dye constantly.*

Righteousness is a Breast-plate, the Cause of God will pay all your expences; let them tremble whom danger finds out of the way of Duty.

9 Rule. *Get your consciences sprinkled with the blood of Christ from all guilt, and that will set your hearts above all fear.*

'Tis guilt upon the conscience that softens and cowardizes our spirits: *The righteous is bold as a Lion*, Prov. 28. 1. 'Twas guilt in *Cains* Conscience that made him cry, *every one that meets me will slay me*, Gen. 4. 14. A guilty Conscience is more terrified with conceited dangers, than a pure Conscience is with real ones. A guilty sinner carries a witness against himself in his own bosom. 'Twas guilty *Herod* cryed out, *John Baptist is risen from*

from the dead. Such a conscience is the Devils Anvil, on which he fabricates all those Swords and Spears with which the guilty sinner pierces and wounds himself. Guilt is to danger, what fire is to Gun-powder; a man need not fear to walk among many barrels of Powder if he have no fire about him.

10. Rule. *Exercise holy trust in times of great distress.*

Make it your business to trust God with your lives and comforts, and then your hearts will be at rest about them. So did *David*, *Psal.* 57. 3. *At what time I am afraid I will trust in thee*, q. d. Lord, if at any time a storm rise, I will make bold to shelter from it under the Covert of thy wings. Go to God by acts of faith and trust, and never doubt but he will secure you, *Isa.* 62. 3. *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee*; God takes it well when thou comest to him thus; Father, my life, my liberty, or estate are hunted after, and I cannot secure them: O let me leave them in thy hand; *the poor leaveth himself with thee*: and doth his God fail him? no, *Thou art the helper of the fatherless, Psalm.* 10. 14. that is, thou art the helper of the destitute one,

that hath none to go to but God. And that is a ſweet Scripture, *Pſalm* 112. 7. *He ſhall not be afraid of evil tidings, his heart is fixed, truſting in the Lord*: he doth not ſay, his ear ſhall be priviledged from the report of evil tidings, he may hear as ſad tidings as other men; but his heart ſhall be priviledged from the terrour of thoſe tidings, *his heart is fixed.*

11. Rule. *Conſult the honour of Religion more, and your perſonal ſafety leſſe.*

Is it for the honour of Religion, (think you) that Chriſtians ſhould be as timerous as Hares, to ſtart at every ſound? will not this tempt the World to think, that whatever you talk, yet your principles are no better than other mens? O what miſchief may the diſcoveries of your fears before them do? 'Twas a noble ſaying of *Nehemiah*, Chap. 6. 11. *Should ſuch a man as I flee? and who being as I am would flee?* Were it not better you ſhould dye, than that the World ſhould be prejudiced againſt Chriſt by your example? for alas! how apt is the World (who judge more by what they ſee in your practiſes, than by what they underſtand of your principles) to conclude from your timerouſneſs, that how much ſoever you commend Faith, and talk

talk of Assurance, yet you dare trust to these things no more than they, when it comes to the tryal. O let not your fears lay such a stumbling-block before the blind World.

12. Rule. *He that will secure his heart from fear, must first secure the eternal interest of his soul in the hands of Jesus Christ.*

When this is done, then you may say, *now World do thy worst.* You will not be very solicitous about a vile body, when you are once assured it shall be well to all eternity with your precious souls. *Fear not them* (saith Christ) *that can kill the body, and after that have no power that they can do.* The assured Christian may smile with contempt upon all his enemies, and say, is this the worst that you can do? what say you Christians, are you assured that your souls are safe, that within a few moments of your dissolution they shall be received by Christ into everlasting habitations? Well, if you be sure of that, never trouble your selves about the instruments and means of your dissolution.

Object. *O, but a violent death is terrible to Nature.*

Answ. But what matter is it, when thy

soul is in Heaven; whether it were let out at thy mouth, or at thy throat? whether thy familiar friends, or barbarous enemies stand about thy dead body, and close thine eyes? alas, it is not worth the making so much ado about, *nihil corpus sentit in nervo cum anima sit in cœlo*, thy soul shall not be sensible in Heaven how thy body is used on earth; no, it shall be swallowed up in life.

13. Rule. *Learn to quench all slavish Creature fears, in the reverential fear of God.*

This is a cure by diversion: 'tis a rare piece of Christian Wisdom to turn those passions of the soul which most predominate into spiritual Channels, to turn natural anger into spiritual zeal, natural mirth into holy chearfulness, and natural fear into an holy dread and awe of God. This method of Cure Christ prescribes in that fore-mentioned place *Mat.* 10. like to which is that in *Isa.* 8. 12, 13. *Fear not their fear*: But how shall we help it? Why, *sanctifie the Lord of Hosts himself, and let him be your fear and your dread.* Natural fear may be allayed for present by natural reason, or the removal of the occasion, but then 'tis but like a Candle blown out with a puff of breath,

breath, which is eaſily blown in again, but if the fear of God extinguiſh it, then 'tis like a Candle quencht in water, which cannot eaſily be re-kindled.

14. Rule. Laſtly, *Pour out thoſe fears to God in Prayer, which the Devil and your own unbelief, pour in upon you in times of danger.*

Prayer is the beſt out-let to fear; where is the Chriſtian that cannot ſet his *probatum eſt* to this direction? I will give you the greateſt Example in the World to encourage you in the uſe of it, even the example of Jeſus Chriſt, *Mark* 14. 32. when the hour of his danger and death drew nigh; he gets into the Garden, ſeparates from the Diſciples, and there wreſtles mightily with God in Prayer, even unto an Agony: in reference to which the Apoſtle ſaith, *Heb.* 5. 7. *Who in the dayes of his fleſh, when he had offered up prayers and ſupplications, with ſtrong cryes and tears, to him that was able to ſave him from death, and was heard in that he feared:* he was heard as to ſtrength and ſupport to carry him through it, though not as to deliverance, or exemption from it.

Now, Oh that theſe things might abide with you, and be reduced to pra-

&iſe in theſe evil dayes, that many trembling ſouls may be eſtabliſhed by them.

5. *Seaſ.* "The fifth Seaſon to exert "this diligence in keeping the heart, is "the time of ſtraits and outward pinch-"ing wants; although at ſuch times "we ſhould complain to God, and not of "God, (the Throne of Grace being e-"rected for a time of need, *Heb.* 4 16.) "yet when the waters of relief run low, "and wants begin to pinch hard: how "prone are the beſt hearts to diſtruſt the "Fountain! When the Meal in the "Barrel, and oyl in the Cruſe are almoſt "ſpent, our faith and patience are almoſt "ſpent too: Now 'tis difficult to keep "down the proud and unbelieving "heart in an holy quietude and ſweet "ſubmiſſion at the foot of God. 'Tis an "eaſie thing to talk of truſting God for "daily bread while we have a full Barn "or Purſe; but to ſay as the Prophet, "*Hab.* 3. 17. *Though the Fig-tree ſhould* "*not bloſſome, neither fruit be in the Vine,* "&c. *yet will I rejoyce in the Lord.* Sure "this is not eaſie. The fifth Caſe there-"fore ſhall be this.

5. Caſe. *How a Chriſtian may keep his heart from diſtruſting God, or repining againſt him when outward wants are either felt, or feared?* This

This Case deserves to be seriously pondred, and especially to be studied now; since it seems to be the design of Providence to empty the people of God of their creature-fulness, and acquaint them with those straits which hitherto they have been altogether strangers to.

Now to secure the heart from the fore-mentioned dangers attending this condition these following Considerations through the blessing of the Spirit may prove effectual. And the first is this,

1. Consid. *That if God reduce you to straits and necessities, yet he deals no otherwise therein with you, than he hath done with some of the choicest and holiest men that ever lived.*

Your condition is not singular, though you have hitherto been strangers to wants, other Saints have daily conversed, and been familiarly acquainted with them. Hear what blessed *Paul* speaks, not of himself only, but in the names of other Saints reduced to like exigencies, 1 *Cor.* 4. 11. *Even to this present hour we both hunger and thirst, and are naked and buffetted, and have no certain dwelling place.* To see such a man as *Paul* going up and down the World with a naked back, and empty belly, and not a house

houſe to put his head in, one that was ſo far above thee in Grace and Holineſs, one that did more ſervice for God in a day, than perhaps thou haſt done him all thy dayes, and yet thou repine as if hardly dealt with! Have you forgot what neceſſities and ſtraits even a *David* hath ſuffered? how great were his ſtraits and neceſſities? 1 *Sam.* 25. 8. *Give I pray thee,* (ſaith he to *Nabal*) *whatſoever cometh to thy hand, to thy Servants and to thy Son* David. Renowned *Muſculus* was forced to dig in the Town-ditch for a maintenance. Famous *Ainſworth* (as I have been credibly informed) forced to ſell the bed he lay on to buy bread. But what ſpeak I of theſe: behold a greater than any of them, even the Son of God. *who is the heir of all things, and by whom the worlds were made*: yet ſometime would have been glad of any thing, having nothing to eat, *Mark* 11. 12. *And on the morrow when they were come from* Bethany, *he was hungry; and ſeeing a Fig-tree afar off having leaves, he came if happily he might find* [*any thing*] *thereon.*

Well then, Hereby God hath ſet no mark of hatred upon you; neither can you infer the want of *love* from the want of *bread.* When thy repining heart puts the

the queſtion, was there ever any ſorrow like unto mine? Ask theſe Worthies, and they will tell thee, though they did not complain and fret as thou doſt, yet they were driven to as great ſtraits as thou art.

2. Conſid. *If God leave you not in this neceſſitous condition without a promiſe, you have no reaſon to repine or deſpond under it.*

That is a ſad condition indeed, to which no promiſe belongs. I remember Mr. *Calvin* upon thoſe words, *Iſa.* 9. 1. *Nevertheleſs, the dimneſſe ſhall not be ſuch as was in her vexation*, &c. Salves the doubt, in what ſenſe the darkneſs of the Captivity was not ſo great, as the leſſer incurſions made by *Tiglath Pileſer*. In the Captivity the City was deſtroyed and the Temple burnt with fire, there was no compariſon in the affliction; but yet the darkneſs ſhould not be ſuch, and the reaſon (ſaith he) is this, *huic certam promiſſionem eſſe additam, cum in prioribus nulla eſſet*, (i. e.) there was a certain promiſe made to this, but none to the other.

'Tis better be as low as Hell with a Promiſe, than in Paradiſe without one. Even the darkneſs of Hell it ſelf would be comparatively no darkneſs at all,

were

were there but a promiſe to enlighten it. Now God hath left many ſweet Promiſes for the faith of his poor people to feed on in this condition, ſuch are theſe: *Pſalm* 34. 9. 10. *O fear the Lord ye his Saints, for there is no want to them that fear him; the Lions do lack and ſuffer hunger, but they that fear the Lord ſhall want nothing that is good.* Pſalm 33. 18, 19. *The eye of the Lord is upon the righteous, to keep them alive in famine.* Pſalm 84. 11. *No good thing will he with-hold from them that walk uprightly.* Rom. 8. 32. *He that ſpared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how ſhall he not with him alſo freely give us all things?* Iſa. 41. 17. *when the poor and the needy ſeek water and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirſt; I the Lord will hear them, I the God of* Iſrael *will not forſake them.* Here you ſee, firſt their extream wants, water being put even for the neceſſaries of life, (2) their certain relief, *I the Lord will hear them*; in which it is ſuppoſed, that they cry unto him in their ſtraits; and he hears their cry.

Having therefore theſe Promiſes, why ſhould not your diſtruſtful hearts conclude like *Davids*, Pſalm 23. 1. *The Lord is my ſhepherd, I ſhall not want.*

Object. *But theſe Promiſes imply conditions,*

tions, if they were absolute they would afford more satisfaction.

Sol. What are those tacite conditions you speak of, but these. (1) That either he will supply, or sanctifie your wants; (2) That you shall have so much as God sees fit for you, and doth this trouble you? would you have the mercy whether sanctified or no? whether God sees it fit for you or no? Methinks, the appetites of Saints after earthly things should not be so ravenous, to seize greedily upon any enjoyment, not careing how they have it.

But Oh, when wants pinch, and we see not whence supplies should come, then our faith in the promise shakes, and we like murmuring *Israel* cry, *He gave bread, can he give water also?* O unbelieving hearts! when did his promise fail? who ever trusted them, and was ashamed? may not God upbraid thee with thine unreasonable infidelity, as *Jer.* 2. 31. *Have I been a wilderness unto you,* &c. or as Christ said to the Disciples, *Since I was with you, lacked ye any thing?* Yea, may you not upbraid your selves, may you not say with good old *Polycarp*, thus many years I have served Christ, and found him a good Master; indeed he

may

may deny what your *wantonneſs*, but not what your real *wants* call for: he will not regard the cry of your *luſts*, nor yet deſpiſe the cry of your *faith*; though he will not inculge and humour your *wanton appetites*, yet he will not violate his own *faithful promiſes*. Theſe Promiſes are your beſt ſecurity for *eternal life*; and 'tis ſtrange if they ſhould not ſatisfie you for *daily bread*: remember ye the words of the Lord, and ſolace your hearts with them amidſt all your wants. 'Tis ſaid of *Epicurus*, that in the dreadful fits of the Collick he often refreſhed himſelf *ob memoriam inventorum*, by calling to mind his inventions in Philoſophy: and of *Poſſidonius* the *Philoſopher*, that in a great fit of the ſtone, he ſollaced himſelf with diſcourſes of moral Vertue: and when the pain twinged him, he would ſay, *nihil agis dolor quamvis ſis moleſtus nunquam confitebor te eſſe malum*: O pain, thou doſt nothing, though thou art a little troubleſom, I will never confeſs thee to be evil. If upon ſuch grounds as theſe they could ſupport themſelves under ſuch grinding and racking pains, and even delude their diſeaſes by them; how much rather ſhould the precious promiſes of God, and the ſweet Experiences which have

have gone along ſtep by ſtep with them, make you to forget all your wants, and comfort you over every ſtrait!

3. Conſid. *If it be bad now, it might have been worſe; hath God denyed thee the comforts of this life? he might have denyed thee Chriſt, peace and pardon alſo, and then thy caſe had been woful indeed.* You know God hath done ſo to millions in the World: how many ſuch wretched objects may your eyes behold every day, that have no comfort in *hand*, nor yet in *hope*, are miſerable here, and will be ſo to eternity; that have a bitter cup, and nothing to ſweeten it, no, not ſo much as any hope that it will be better. But it is not ſo with you, though you be poor in this World, *yet rich in faith, and heirs of the Kingdom which God hath promiſed, Jam.* 2. 5. O learn to ſet ſpiritual riches over againſt temporal poverty! Ballance all your preſent troubles with your ſpiritual priviledges. Indeed, if God had denied your ſouls the Robes of Righteouſneſs to cloath them, the hidden Manna to feed them; the heavenly Manſions to receive them, if your ſouls were left deſtitute, as well as your bodies; you might well be penſive, but this conſideration hath enough to bring the conſidering

dering ſoul to reſt under any outward ſtrait. 'Twas bravely ſaid by *Luther*, when want began to pinch him, *let us be contented with our hard fare* (ſaid he) *for do we not feaſt with Angels upon Chriſt the bread of Life: And bleſſed be God* (ſaith *Paul*) *who hath abounded unto us in all ſpiritual bleſſings*, Eph. 1. 3.

4. Conſid. *This affliction though great, is not ſuch an affliction but God hath far greater, with which he chaſtiſes the dearly beloved of his ſoul in this World, and ſhould he remove this, and inflict thoſe, you would account your preſent ſtate a very comfortable ſtate, and bleſſe God to be as now you are.*

What think ye Sirs? ſhould God remove your preſent troubles, ſupply all your outward wants, give you the deſire of your hearts in Creature-comforts, but hide his face from you, ſhoot his arrows into your ſouls, and cauſe the venom of them to drink up your ſpirits? ſhould he leave you but a few dayes to the buffeting of Satan and his blaſphemous injections? ſhould he hold your eyes but a few nights waking with horrors of Conſcience, toſſing to and fro till the dawning of the day? ſhould he lead you through the Chambers of death? ſhew you the viſions of darkneſs? and make his

his terrors set themselves in array against you? then tell me if you would not count it a choice mercy to be back again in your former necessitous condition, with peace of Conscience; and count bread and water, with Gods favour a happy state? O then! take heed of repining. Say not God deals hardly with you, least you provoke him to convince you, by your own sence and feeling, that he hath worse Rods than these for unsubmissive and froward Children.

5. Consid. *If it be bad now, it will be better shortly.*

O keep thy heart by that Consideration! the Meal in the Barrel is almost spent, well, be it so; why should that trouble me, If I am almost beyond the need and use of all these things. The Traveller hath spent almost all his money, but a shilling or two left; Well, (saith he) though my money be almost spent, yet my journey is almost finisht too; I am near home, and then shall be fully supplied. If there be no Candles in the house, yet 'tis a comfort to think that its almost day, and then there will be no need of Candles. I am afraid Christian thou mis-reckonest thy self, when thou thinkest; my provision is almost

ſpent, and I have a great way to travel, many years to live, and nothing to live upon; it may be not half ſo many as thou ſuppoſeſt; in this be confident, if thy proviſion be ſpent, either freſh ſupplies are coming, (though thou ſeeſt not from whence) or thou art nearer thy journeys end than thou reckoneſt thy ſelf to be. Deſponding ſoul, doth it become a man or woman travelling upon the Road to that heavenly City, and almoſt arrived there, within a few days journey of his Fathers houſe, where all his wants ſhall be ſupplyed, to take on thus about a little meat, drink or cloaths, which he fears he ſhal want by the way? It was a noble ſaying of the 40 *Martyrs*, famous in the *Eccleſiaſtical Story*, when turned out naked in a froſty night to be ſtarved to death; with theſe words they comforted one another λείμμυς ὁ χειμων &c. the winter indeed is ſharp and cold, but Heaven is warm and comfortable; here we ſhiver for cold, but *Abrahams* boſome will make amends for all.

Obj. 1. *But I may dye for want?*

Sol. (1) Who ever did ſo? where were the Righteous forſaken? (2) If ſo, your journey is ended, and you fully ſupplied.

Obj. 2. *But I am not ſure of that, were*

I sure of Heaven, it were another matter.

Sol. Are you not sure of that? then you have other matters to trouble your selves about than these: Methinks, this should be the least of all your cares; I do not find that souls perplexed and troubled about the want of Christ, pardon of sin, *&c.* are usually very anxious, or sollicitous about these things. He that seriously puts such questions as these: what shall I do to be saved? how shall I know my sin is pardoned? doth not usually trouble himself, with what shall I eat, what shall I drink? or wherewithall shall I be cloathed?

6. Consid. *Doth it become the children of such a Father to distrust his all-sufficiency, or repine against any of his Dispensations?*

Do you well to question his care and love upon every new exigence; say, have you not been ashamed of this formerly? hath not your Fathers seasonable provisions for you in former straits, put you to the blush? and made you resolve never to question his love and care any more, and yet will you renew your unworthy suspicions of him again? Dis-ingenious Childe, reason thus with thy self, if I perish for want of what is good

and needful for me, it must either be because my Father knows not my wants, or hath not wherewith to supply them; or else regards not what becomes of me. Which of these shall I charge upon him: not the first; for, *Mark 6. 32. My Father knows what I have need of*, my condition is not hid from him: Nor the second, *for the earth is the Lords and the fulness of it*, Psalm 24. 1. His Name is *God All-sufficient*, Gen. 17. 1 Not the last, *for, as a father pities his children, so the Lord pities them that fear him*: Psalm 103. 13. *The Lord is exceeding pitiful and of tender mercy*, James 5. 11. *He hears the young Ravens when they cry*, Job 38. 41. and will he not hear me? *Consider* (saith Christ) *the fowls of the ayr*, Matth. 6. 26. Not the fowls at the door, that are every day fed by hand, but the fowles of the ayr, that have none to provide for them. Doth he feed and clothe his enemies, and will he forget his children? He heard the very cry of *Ishmael* in distress, *Gen.* 21. 17. O my unbelieving heart! dost thou yet doubt? Remember *Hagar* and the Childe.

7. Consid. *Your poverty is not your sin, but your affliction only! if by sinful means you have not brought it upon your selves; and if*

it

it be but an affliction, it may be born the easier for that.

'Tis hard indeed to bear an affliction coming upon us as the fruit and punishment of sin, when men are under trouble upon that account; they use to say, O! if it were but a single affliction coming from the hand of God by way of tryal, I could bear it, but I have brought it upon my self by sin, it comes as the punishment of sin; the marks of Gods displeasure are upon it, 'tis the guilt within that troubles and galls, more than the want without.

But it is not so here, and therefore you have no reason to be cast down under it.

Object. *But though there be no sting of guilt, yet this condition wants not other stings: at first the discredit of Religion; I cannot comply with mine engagements in the world, and thereby Religion is like to suffer.*

Sol. 'Tis well you have an heart to discharge every duty, yet if God disable you by Providence, 'tis no discredit to your profession, because you do not that which you cannot do, so long as it is your desire, & endeavour to do what you can and ought to do, and in this case Gods will is that lenity and forbearance be exercised towards you, *Deut.* 24.12,13.

2 Object. *But it grieves me to behold the neceſsities of others, whom I was wont to relieve and refreſh, but now cannot.*

Sol. If you cannot, it ceaſes to be your duty, and God accepts the drawing out of your ſoul to the hungry in compaſſion and deſire to help them, though you cannot draw forth a full purſe to relieve and ſupply them.

3. Obj. *But I find ſuch a condition full of temptations, a ſore clog in the way to Heaven.*

Sol. Every condition in the World hath its clogs, and attending temptations; and were you in a proſperous condition, you might there meet with more temptations and fewer advantages than you now have: For though I confeſs poverty hath its temptations as well as proſperity, yet I am confident, proſperity hath not thoſe excellent advantages that poverty hath: for here you have an opportunity to diſcover the ſincerity of your love to God, when you can live upon him, find enough in him, and conſtantly follow him, even when all external inducements and motives fail. And thus I have ſhewed you how to keep your hearts from the temptations and dangers attending a poor and low condi-

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tion in the World, when want pinches, and the heart begins to sink, then improve, and bless God for these helps to keep it.

6. *Season.* "The sixth Season of expressing this diligence in keeping the "heart is the Season of Duty; when "we draw nigh to God in publick, private, or secret Duties, then 'tis time to "look to the heart; for the vanity of the "heart seldome discovers it self more "than at such times. How oft doth the "poor soul cry out, O Lord how fain "would I serve thee, but vain thoughts "will not let me; I came to open my "heart to thee, to delight my soul in "communion with thee, but my cor-"ruptions have set upon me: Lord rate "off these vain thoughts, and suffer them "not to prostitute the soul, which is "espoused to thee, before thy face. The "sixth Case then is this.

6. Case. *How the heart may be kept from distractions by vain thoughts, in the time of Duty.*

There is a two-fold distraction or wandring of the heart in Duty: (1) voluntary and habitual, *Psalm* 78. 8. *They set not their hearts aright, and their spirit was not stedfast with God.* This is the case

of Formaliſts, and it proceeds from the want of an holy bent, and inclination of the heart to God; their hearts are under the power of their luſts, and therefore 'tis no wonder they go after their luſts, even when they are about holy things, *Ezek.* 33. 31. (2) Involuntary and lamented diſtractions, *Rom.* 7. 21, 24. *I finde then a law, that when I would do good, evil is preſent with me, O wretched man that I am, &c.* This proceeds not from the want of a holy bent and aim, but from the weakneſs and imperfection of grace. And in this caſe the ſoul may make the like complaint againſt its own corruptions that *Abijah* did againſt *Jeroboam*, 2 *Chro.* 13. 6, 7. *Yet Jeroboam the ſon of Nebat is riſen up againſt his Lord, when Rehoboham was young and tender-hearted, and could not withſtand them, and there are gathered unto him vain men the children of Belial.* Grace hath a dominion, but luſts are mutinous and ſeditious, during the infancy thereof. But it is not my buſineſs to ſhew you how theſe diſtractions come into the heart, but rather how to get, and keep them out of the heart; in order whereto take theſe ten following Helps.

1. *Help.* Sequeſter your ſelves from all earthly imployments, and ſet apart ſome

some time for solemn preparation to meet God in duty: you cannot come reeking hot out of the world into Gods presence, but you will find a tang of it in your duties; it is with the heart a few minutes since plunged in the world, now at the feet of God, just as with the sea after a storm, which still continues working, muddy and disquiet, though the wind be laid and storm over: thy heart must have some time to settle. There are few Musicians that can take down a lute, or viol and play presently upon it, without some time to tune it; there are few Christians can presently say as, *Psal.* 57. 7. *O God, my heart is fixed, it is fixed.* O when thou goest to God in any duty, take thy heart aside and say, O my Soul, I am now addressing my self to the greatest work that ever a Creature was imployed about: I am going into the awful presence of God about business of everlasting moment.

Oh my Soul! leave trifling now, be composed, watchful, serious, this is no common work, 'tis God work, Soul work, Eternity work, I am now going forth bearing seed, which will bring forth fruit to life or death in the world to come pause a while upon thy sins, wants, troubles,

bles, steep thy thoughts a while in these before thou address thy self to duty. *David first mused, and then spake with his tongue*, *Psal.* 39. 3, 4. So *Psal.* 45. 1. my heart is enditing, &c.

2. *Help.* Having composed thy heart by previous meditation, presently set a guard upon thy senses; how often are poor Christians in danger of loosing the eyes of their mind by those of their body, for this *Job covenanted with his senses*, Chap. 31. 1. for this *David* prayed, *Psal.* 119. 37. *turn away mine eies from beholding vanity, and quicken thou me in thy way:* this may serve to expound that *mystical Arabian proverb* which advises *to shut the windows, that the house may be light:* 'twere excellent if you could say in your on-sets upon duty, as an holy one once did, when he came off from duty. *Claudimini oculi mei claudimini*, &c. *be shut O my eyes be shut! for it is impossible you should ever see such beauty and glory in any Creature, as I have now seen in God.* You had need avoid all occasions of distraction from without, for be sure you will meet enough from within, intention of spirit in the work of God locks up the eye and eare against vanity. When *Marcellus* entred the gates of *Syracuse*, *Archimides*

was

was so intent about his Mathematical Scheame, that he took no notice of the Souldiers when they entred his very study with drawn *swords*, a *fervent*, cannot be a *vagrant* heart.

3. Help. *Beg of God a mortified fancy*, a working fancy (saith one) how much soever it be extold among men, is a great snare to the Soul; except it work in fellowship with right reason, and a sanctified heart: the phantasie is a power of the Soul placed between the senses and the understanding, 'tis that which first stirrs it self in the Soul, and by its motion the other powers are stirred, 'tis the common shop where thoughts are first forged and framed, and as this is, so are they; if imaginations be not first cast down, 'tis impossible that every thought of the heart should be brought into obedience to Christ, 2 *Cor.* 10.5. this fancy is naturally the wildest and most untameable power in the Soul. Some Christians (*especially* such as are of hot and dry constitutions) have much to doe with it.

And truly, the more spiritual the heart is, the more 'tis troubled about the vanity and wildness of it. O what a sad thing it is! that thy nobler Soul must lackey up and down, after a vain roving fancy, that

that ſuch a *begger* ſhould ride on horſe-back and ſuch a *Prince* run after it on foot; that it ſhould call off the Soul from attendance upon God, when it is moſt ſweetly ingaged in Communion with him; to proſecute ſuch vanities as it will ſtart at ſuch times before it! beg earneſtly of God that the power of ſanctification may once come upon it. Some Chriſtians have attained ſuch a degree of Sanctification of their fancies, that they have had much ſweetneſs left upon their hearts by the ſpiritual workings of it in the night ſeaſon: when thy fancy is more mortified, thy thoughts will be more orderly and fixed.

4. Help. *If thou wouldſt keep thy heart from thoſe vain excurſions realize to thy ſelf by faith, the holy and awful preſence of God in duties.*

If the preſence of a grave man will compoſe us to ſeriouſneſs, how much more the preſence of an holy God? thinkſt thou, thy Soul durſt be ſo gariſh and light, if the ſence of a divine eye were upon it? remember the place where thou art is the place of his feet, *Iſai.* 60. 13. act faith upon the *Omniſciency* of God, *All the Churches ſhall know that I am hee, that ſearcheth the heart, and tryeth*

tryeth the reins, and will give to every one of you according to your works. Rev. 2. 23. *all things are naked and open to the eyes of him with whom we have to doe* Heb. 4. 12. realize his infinite *holineſs* into what a ſerious compoſed frame did the ſight of God in his holineſs put the ſpirit of the Prophet *Iſai* 6. 5. labour to get alſo upthy heart due apprehenſions of the *greatneſs* of God, ſuch as *Abraham* had, *Gen.* 18. 27. *I that am but duſt and aſhes have taken upon me to ſpeak to God:* And laſtly remember the *jealouſie* of God, how tender he is over his worſhip, Lev. 10. 3. *And Moſes ſaid unto Aaron, this is that the Lord ſpake, ſaying, I will be ſanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified.*

A man that is praying (ſaith Bernard) *ſhould behave himſelf as if he were entring into the Court of Heaven, where he ſees the Lord upon his throne, ſurrounded with ten thouſand of his Angels, and Saints miniſtring unto him.* When thou comeſt from a duty, in which thy heart hath been toying and wandring, thou mayeſt ſay, verily God was in this place, and I knew it not. Suppoſe all the impertinencies and vanities which have paſt through thine heart in a duty were written out,

and

and interlined with thy petitions, couldst thou have the face to present it to God? should thy tongue but utter all the thoughts of thy heart in prayer, would not men abhor thee? why, thy thoughts are vocal to God, *Psal.* 139. 2. If thou wert petitioning the King for thy life, would it not provoke him to see thee playing with thy handstrings, or catching every fly that lights upon thy cloaths whilst thou art speaking to him about such serious matters? O think sadly upon that Scripture, *Psal.* 87. 7. *God is greatly to be feared in the assemblies of his Saints, and to be had in reverence of all that are round about him.* Why did God descend in thundrings and lightnings, and dark clouds upon *Sinai*, *Exo.* 19. 16, 18. Why did the mountains smoke under him? the people quake and tremble round about him, yea *Moses* himself not exempted, but to teach the people that great truth, *Heb.* 12. 28, 29. *Let us have grace; whereby we may serve him acceptably with reverence and godly fear, for our God is a consuming fire*: present God thus before thee, and thy vain heart will quikly be reduced, to a more serious frame.

5. Help. *Maintain a praying frame of heart in the intervals of duty*; What is the reason

reason our hearts are so dull, careless and wandring, when we come to hear or pray, but because there have been such long intermissions in our communion with God; by reason whereof the heart is out of a praying frame: if that spiritual warmth, those holy impressions we carry from God in one duty, were but preserved to kindle another duty; it would be of marvellous advantage, to keep the heart intent, and serious with God.

To this purpose those intermediate ejaculations, betwixt stated and solemn duties, are of most sweet and excellent use; by these, one duty is as it were linked to another, and so the Soul as it were wraps up it self in a chain of duties. That Christian seldome misses his mark in solemn duty, that shoots up many of these darts in the intervals of duty, 'tis an excellent commendation Christ bestows upon the spouse, *Cant.* 4. 11. *Thy lips O my spouse drop as the hony combe*: upon which text one gives this sweet note, the hony comb drops actually but sometimes, but it always hangs full of sweet drops ready to fall: if our ejaculations were more, our lamentations upon this account would be fewer.

6. Help.

6. Help. *Endeavour to ingage and raise thy affections to God in duty, if thou wouldst have thy distractions cured.*

A dropping eye, and a melting heart, are seldom troubled as others upon this account: When the Soul is intent about any work, it gathers in its strength, and bends all the thoughts about it; and when its deeply affected, it will be intent, the affections command the thoughts to goe after them, deadness causes distraction, and distraction increases deadness; could you but look upon duties as the galleries of communion in which you walk with God, where your Souls may be filled with those ravishing, and matchless delights that are in his presence; your Soul would not offer to stir from thence.

It is with the heart in duty, as it is with those that dig for gold oare; they try here, and finding none, try there; and so go from place to place till at last they hit upon the rich vein, and there they sit down. If thy heart could but once hit the rich vein in duty, it would dwell and abide there with delight, and constancy. *O how I love thy law, it is my meditation day and night! Psal.* 119. 97. The Soul could dwell day

day and night upon its knees, when once its delights, loves, and desires are ingaged. What's the reason your hearts are so shufling, especially in secret duties? why are you ready to be gone almost as soon as you are come into the presence of God? but because your affections are not ingaged.

7. Help. *Mourn over the matter to God, and call in assistance from Heaven; when vain thoughts assault thy heart in duty.*

When the messenger of Satan buffeted *Paul* by wicked injections as is supposed, he goes to God, and mourns over it before him, 2 *Cor.* 12. 8. never slight wandring thoughts in duty as small matters, follow every vain thought with a deep sigh, turn thee to God with such words as these, Lord I came hither to speak with thee, and here a busie Devil, and a vain heart conspiring together have set upon me. O my God? what an heart have I? shall I never wait upon thee without distraction! when shall I enjoy an hour of free communion with thee? help me my God this once, do but display thy glory before mine eyes; and my heart shall quickly be recovered: Thou knowest I came hither to enjoy thee, and shall I goe away without thee!

See, how the heart of thy poor child works towards thee! ſtrives to get near thee, but cannot: my heart is aground, *come thou north wind, blow ſouth wind*, O for a freſh gale now from thy Spirit! to ſet my affections, afloat! couldſt thou but thus affectionately bewail thy diſtractions to God, thou mightſt obtain help and deliverance from them: He would ſay to Satan, and thine imperious luſts as *Ahaſhuerus* ſaid of *Haman*, what will he force the Queen before my face? who are theſe, that ſet upon my child in my work, and preſence?

8. Help. *Look upon the ſucceſs and ſweetneſs of thy duties, as very much depending upon the keeping of thy heart cloſe with God in them.*

Theſe two things, the ſucceſs, and ſweetneſs of duty, are as dear to a Chriſtian as his two eyes: and both of theſe muſt neceſſarily be loſt, if the heart be loſt in duty, *Job* 35. 13. *Surely God heareth not vanity, neither doth the Almighty regard it*: the promiſe is made to an heart ingaged, *Jer.* 29. 13. *Then ſhall you ſeek me, and find me, when ye ſhall ſearch for me with all your heart.* Well then, when thou findeſt thy heart under the power of deadneſs and diſtraction, ſay to thy

Soul,

Soul, O what doe I loſe by a careleſs heart now! my praying times are the choiceſt parts, the golden ſpots of all my time: could I but get up this heart with God, I might now obtain ſuch mercies as would be matter for a ſong to all eternity.

9. Help. *Look upon it as a great diſcovery of the ſincerity, or hypocriſie of your hearts according as you find them, carefull, or careleſs in this matter.*

Nothing will ſtartle an upright heart more than this: What, ſhall I give way to a cuſtomary wandring of heart from God? ſhall the ſpot of the hypocrit appear upon my Soul? they indeed can drudge on, in the round of duty; never regarding the frames of their hearts, *Ezek.* 33.31,32. but ſhall I doe ſo? when men come into the preſence chamber, and the King is not there; they bow to the empty chair. O never let me be ſatisfied with empty duties! never let me take my leave of a duty, *untill mine eyes have ſeen the King, the Lord of hoſts.*

10. Help. *Laſtly, 'twill be of ſpecial uſe to keep thine heart with God in duties, to conſider what influence all thy duties have into thine eternity.*

Theſe are your ſeed times, and what

you ſow in your duties in this world, you muſt look to reap the fruit of it in another world, *Gal.* 6. 7, 8. if you ſow to the fleſh, of that you ſhall reap corruption: but it to the ſpirit, life everlaſting. O my Soul, anſwer ſeriouſly; wouldſt thou be willing to reap the fruit of vanity, in the world to come? dareſt thou ſay, when thy thoughts are roving to the ends of the earth in duty? when thou ſcarce mindeſt what thou ſayeſt or heareſt, now Lord, I am ſowing to the Spirit, now I am providing and laying up for eternity, now I am ſeeking for glory, honour, and immortality, now I am ſtriving to enter in at the ſtrait gate, now I am taking the kingdom of Heaven by an holy violence? O ſuch a conſideration as this, ſhould make the multitudes of vain thoughts that preſs in upon thy heart in duty, to flie ſeven ways before it: and thus I have ſhewn you, how to keep your hearts, in the times of duty.

7. *Seaſon.* "The ſeventh ſeaſon cal-
"ling for more than common diligence
"to keep the heart is, when we receive
"injuries and abuſes from men, ſuch is
"the depravedneſs and corruption of
"man in his collapſed ſtate, that *homo*

homini

"*homini lupus*, one man is become a wolf, "a Tyger to another: they are as the "Prophet complains *Hab.* 1. 14. *as the "fishes of the sea, and as the creeping things, "that have no ruler over them*, and as wick- "ed men are cruel and oppressive one "to another, so they conspire together "to abuse and wrong the people of God, "as the same Prophet complains, *v.* 13. "*the wicked devoureth the man that is more "righteous than he.* Now when we are "thus abused and wronged, 'tis hard to "keep the heart from revengful moti- "ons: to make it meekly and quietly to "commit the cause to him that judgeth "righteously: to exercise no other affe- "ction but pity towards them that abuse "us. Surely the Spirit that is in us lust- "eth to revenge, but it must not be so: "you have choice helps in the Gospel to "keep down your hearts from such sin- "ful motions against your enemies, and "to sweeten your imbitter'd Spirits: the "seventh case therefore shall be this.

7. Case. *How a Christian may keep his heart from revengful motions, under the greatest injuries and abuses from men?*

The gospel indeed allows a liberty to vindicate our innocency, and assert our rights; but not to vent our corruptions,

and invade Gods right: when therefore thou findeſt thy heart begin to be inflamed by revengful motions, preſently apply the following remedies; and the firſt is this.

1. Remed. *Urge upon thy heart the ſevere prohibitions of revenge by the law of God.* Remember that this is forbidden fruit, how pleaſing and luſcious ſoever it be to our vitiated appetites, O ſaith nature, revenge is ſweet; O but ſaith God, the effects thereof ſhall be bitter: how plainly hath God interdicted this fleſh pleaſing ſin, *Prov.* 20. 22. *Say not I will recompenſe evil.* Prov. 24. 29. *Say not I will doe ſo to him as he hath done to me.* Rom. 12. 17. *Recompenſe to no man evil for evil.* and v. 19. *Avenge not your ſelves but rather give place to wrath*: nay that's not all, but Prov. 25. 21. *If thine enemy hunger, feed him, if he thirſt give him drink.* The word feed him, as *Criticks* obſerve, ſignifies to feed cheerfully and tenderly, as birds doe their young ones: The Scripture is a great friend to the peace and tranquillity of humane ſocieties, which can never be preſerved, if revenge be not depoſed; it was wont to be an argument urged by the Chriſtians to prove their religion to be ſupernatural

and

and pure, that it forbids revenge which is ſo ſweet to nature; and verily 'tis a thouſand pities ſuch an argument ſhould be loſt. Well then awe your hearts with the authority of God in theſe Scriptures: and when carnal reaſon ſaith, mine enemy deſerves to be hated, let Conſcience reply, but doth God deſerve to be diſobeyed? thus, and thus he hath done, and ſo he hath wronged me: but what hath God done that I ſhould wrong him? if he dare be ſo bold to break the *peace*, ſhall I be ſo wicked to break the *precept*? if he fears not to wrong me, ſhall not I fear to wrong God? O let the fear of Gods threatnings repreſs ſuch ſinful motions.

2. Remed. *Set before your eyes the moſt eminent patterns of meekneſs and forgiveneſs, that your Souls may fall in love with it.*

This is the way to cut off thoſe common pleas of the fleſh for revenge: as thus, no man would bear ſuch an affront, yes, ſuch and ſuch have born as bad and worſe, I ſhall be reckoned a coward, a fool, if I paſs by this: no matter, as long as I follow the examples of the wiſeſt and holieſt of men: never did any ſuffer more and greater abuſes from men than Chriſt did, and never did any carry it

more peaceably and forgivingly, 53. 7. *he was oppreſſed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he is brought as a lamb to the ſlaughter,* &c. This pattern the Apoſtle ſets before you for your imitation, 1 Pet. 2. 21, 22, 23. *For even hereunto are ye called, becauſe Chriſt alſo ſuffered for us, leaving us an example that we ſhould follow his ſteps: Who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he ſuffered, he threatned not, but committed himſelf to him that judgeth righteouſly.* To be of a meek forgiving Spirit is Chriſt like, God like, *then ſhall you be the children of your Father, which is in Heaven, for he maketh his ſun to riſe upon the evil and upon the good, and ſendeth rain on the juſt, and on the unjuſt, Matth.* 5. 45. How eminently alſo did this Spirit of Chriſt reſt upon his Apoſtles; never were there ſuch men upon earth for true excellency of Spirit. None were ever abuſed more, or ſuffered their abuſes better: *Being reviled (ſay they) we bleſs, being perſecuted we ſuffer it, being defamed we intreat.* 1 *Cor.* 4. 12, 13. Mr. *Calvin* though a man of a quick Spirit, yet had attained ſuch a degree of this Chriſt like forgiveneſs that when *Luther* had uſed ſome opprobrious language of him, the good man ſaid no more but this;

although

although he should call me a Devil, yet I will acknowledge him to be an eminent servant of Jesus Christ.

I have often heard it reported of holy Mr. *Dod* that when one inraged at his close convincing doctrine pickt a quarrel with him, smote him on the face, and dasht out two of his teeth: this meek servant of Christ spat out the teeth and blood into his hand and said, see here, you have knockt out two of my teeth, and that without any just provocation; but on condition I might do your Soul good, I would give you leave to dash out all the rest: here is the excellency of a Christians Spirit, above all the attainments of Moral Heathens: though they were excellent at many other things, yet they could never attain this forgiving Spirit: it is the first office of justice (said *Tully*) to hurt no body, unless first provoked by an injury, whereupon *Lactantius*, *O quam simplicem veramque sententiam duorum verborum, adjectione corrupit!* What a dainty sentence spoiled the Oratour by adding those two last words! strive then for this excellency of Spirit, which is the proper excellency of Christians, do some singular thing that others cannot doe, and then you will have a testimony

teſtimony in their Conſciences: When *Moſes* out-did the *Magicians*, they were forced to confeſs the finger of God in that buſineſs.

3. Remed. *Conſider well the quality of the perſon that hath wronged thee,* either he is a good man or a wicked man that hath done thee the injury: if he be a good man, there is light and tenderneſs in his Conſcience, and that will bring him at laſt to a ſenſe of the evil he hath done; however Chriſt hath forgiven him greater injuries than theſe, and why ſhouldeſt not thou? will not Chriſt upbraid him with any of thoſe wrongs done to him, but frankly forgives him all, and wilt thou take him by the throat for ſome petty abuſe that he hath done to thee?

Or is he a wicked man? if ſo, truly you have more need to exerciſe pity than revenge towards him, and that upon a double account: for (1) He is beſide himſelf ſo indeed is every unconverted ſinner *Luk.* 15. 17. ſhould you go into *Bedlam* and there hear one rail at you, another mock you, and a third threaten you, would you ſay I will be revenged upon them? no, you would rather goe away pitying them. Alas, poor creatures they are out of their wits, and know not what they

they doe. Beſides, (2) there is a day coming if they repent not, when they will have more miſery than you can find in your hearts to wiſh them: you need not ſtudy revenge, Gods vengeance ſleepeth not; and will ſhortly take place upon them, and is not that enough? have they not an eternity of miſery coming? if they repent not, this muſt be the portion of their cup, and if ever they doe repent, they will be ready to make you reparation.

4. Rem. *Keep down thy heart by this conſideration, that by revenge thou canſt but ſatisfie a luſt, but by forgiveneſs thou ſhalt conquer a luſt.*

Suppoſe, by revenge thou ſhouldſt deſtroy one enemy, I will ſhew thee how by forgiving thou ſhalt conquer three: thine own *luſt*, the Devils *temptation*, and thine enemies *heart*: and is not this a more glorious conqueſt? if by revenge thou overcome thine enemy, yet (as *Bernard* ſaith) *infelix victoria, ubi ſuperans virum; ſuccumbit vitio*: unhappy victory, when by overcoming another man; thou art overcome by thine own corruption, but this way you may obtain a glorious conqueſt indeed. What an honourable and dry victory did *David* this way

way obtain over *Saul*, 1 *Sam.* 24.16,17. *And it came to pass when David had made an end of speaking these words, that Saul lift up his voice and wept; and he said to David, thou art more righteous than I.*

It must be a very dif-ingenious nature indeed, upon which meekness and forgiveness will not work; a stony heart which this fire will not melt: To this sense is that *Prov.* 25. 21. *If thine enemy hunger feed him, if he thirst give him drink, for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head.* Some will have it a sin punishing fire, but others, an heart melting fire: to be sure, twill either melt his heart, or aggravate his misery. *Augustin* thinks that *Stevens* prayer for his enemies was the great means of *Pauls* conversion.

5. Rem. *Seriously propound this question to thy own heart, have I got any good by the wrong and injuries received, or have I not?* If they have done you no good, turn the revenge upon your selves. O that I should have such a bad heart, that can get no good out of such troubles. O that my Spirit should be so unlike to Christs! the patience and meekness of other Christians have turned all the injuries thrown at them into precious stones: the Spirits of others have been raised in blessing God

God when they have been loaded with reproaches bythe world:they have bound them as an ornament to their necks. *Superbus fio* (said *Luther*) *quod video nomen peſsimum mihi creſcere.* I could even be proud upon it, that I have a bad name among wicked men: to the same purpoſe *Jerome* ſweetly, *Gratias ago Deo meo quod dignus ſum quem mundus oderit.* I thanke my God, that I am worthy to be hated of the world: thus their hearts were provoked by injuries to magnifie God, and bleſs him for them: if it work contrary with me I have cauſe enough to be filled with ſelf diſplacency.

If you have got any good by them, if the reproaches and wrongs you have received, have made you ſearch your hearts the more, watch your ways the more narrowly; if their wronging you have made you ſee how you have wronged God, then let me ſay for them as *Paul* did for himſelf, pray forgive them this wrong.

What can you not find an heart to forgive one that hath been inſtrumental of ſo much good to you, that's ſtrange, what though they meant it for evil, yet if God have turned it to good; you have no more reaſon to rage againſt the inſtrument

ſtrument, then he had who received a wound from his enemy which only brake and let out that impoſtume, which otherwiſe had been his death.

6. Rem. *'Tis of excellent uſe to keep the heart from revenge, to look up and eye the firſt cauſe by which all our troubles are ordered.*

This will calm and meeken our Spirits quickly; never did a wicked tongue try the patience of a Saint more than *Davids* was tryed by that railing *Shimei*: yet the Spirit of this good man was not at all poiſoned with revenge, though he goes along curſing and caſting ſtones at him all the way: yea, though *Abiſhai* offered *David*, if he pleaſed, the head of that enemy; but the King ſaid, *What have I to doe with you, ye ſons of Zerviah? So let him curſe, becauſe the Lord hath ſaid unto him, curſe David; Who ſhall then ſay, wherefore haſt thou done ſo?* it may be God uſes him as his rod to laſh me, becauſe I by my ſin made his enemies to blaſpheme him: and ſhall I be angry with the rod? how irrational were that? this alſo was it that quieted *Job* he doth not rail, and vow revenge upon the *Caldeans* and *Sabeans*, but eyes God as the orderer of thoſe troubles, and is quiet. *The Lord hath*

taken

taken away, blessed be his name, Job 1. 21.

Object. But you will say, *To turn aside the right of a man, to subvert a man in his cause, the Lord approveth not,* Lam. 3. 36.

Ans. True, but though it fall not under his approving? yet it doth under his permitting will, and there is a great argument for quiet submission in that: nay he hath not only the permitting, but the ordering of all those troubles, did we see more of an holy God, we should shew less of a corrupt nature in such tryals.

7. Rem. *Consider how you daily wrong God, and you will not be so easily inflamed with revenge against others that have wronged you.*

You are daily grieving and wronging God, and yet he bears, forgives, and will not take vengeance upon you; and will you be so quick in avenging your selves upon others? O what a sharp and terrible rebuke is that, *Matth.* 18. 32, 33. *O thou wicked, and slothful servant; I forgave thee all that debt because thou desiredst me, shouldst not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow servant, even as I had pity upon thee?* None should be filled with bowels of pity forbearance, and mercy, to such

as

as wrong them, as those should be that have experienced the riches of mercy themselves: methinks the mercy of God to us should melt our very bowels into mercy over others: 'tis impossible we can be *cruel* to others, except we forget how kind Christ hath been to us: those that have found mercy should shew mercy: if kindness cannot work, methinks fear should; *If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses*, Matth. 6. 15.

8. Rem. *Lastly, let the Consideration of the day of the Lord which draweth nigh, withhold your hearts from anticipating it by acts of revenge*

Why are ye so quick? is not the Lord at hand, to aveng all his abused servants? *Be patient therefore my brethren unto the coming of the Lord: Behold the husbandman waiteth*, &c. *Be ye also patient, for the coming of the Lord draws nigh: grudg not one against another, brethren, least ye be condemned. Behold the judge standeth at the door*, *Jam.* 5. 7, 8, 9. This text affords three arguments against reveng. (1) The Lords near approach. (2) The example of the husbandmans patience. (3) The danger we draw upon our selves by anticipating Gods judgment: vengeance is mine

mine saith the Lord, he will distribute justice more equally and impartially than you can: they that believe they have a God to right them, will not so much wrong themselves as to avenge their own wrongs.

1. *Ob.* But flesh and bloud is not able to bear such abuses.

Sol. If you resolve to consult flesh and blood in such cases, and do no more but what that will enable you to do; never pretend to Religion. Christians must do singular and supernatural things.

2. *Ob.* But if I pack up such abuses, I shall be reckoned a fool, and every one will trample upon me.

Sol. (1) You may be reckoned so among fools, but God and good men will account it your wisdom, and the excellency of your Spirits. (2) It must be a base Spirit indeed that will trample upon a meek and forgiving Christian: and thus learn to keep your hearts from revenge under all your provocations.

8. *Season.* "The next season in which "we are in danger of losing our hearts "is, when we meet with great crosses "and provocations: then sinful passion "is apt to transport the heart, 'tis the

"fault of many good men to be of hasty "and quick spirits when provoked; "though they dare not concoct anger in- "to malice, for that would be a note of "*wickedness*, yet are they very incident "to sudden anger which is a sign of *weak-* "*ness*. *Beza* in the life of *Cal-* "*vin* observes, that he was "of a keen and hasty spirit: "and he that writes the life "of great *Cameron*, saith, "that his anger was soon "stirred towards his near "and familiar friends, but then he would "easily depose it, and acknowledg his "weakness: alas, when provocations, "and tryals of our patience come, we "know not what Spirits we are of. The "eighth Case therefore is this.

Bez. in Vit. Cal. p. 109.

Icon. Cameronis.

8. Case. *How the heart may be kept meek and patient under great crosses and provocations?*

There are three sorts of anger, natural, holy and sinfull anger. (1) Natural which is nothing else but the motion of the irascible appetite towards an offensive object: and this in it self is no sin, they are propassions rather than passions; the infelicities, rather than the sins of nature, as *Jerome* calls them: reason (saith *Plutarch*

Plutarch) is the *driver*, the Soul is the *Chariot*, and the two horſes that draw it on in all its motions, are the concupiſcible and iraſcible appetites; whilſt theſe are rightly managed by reaſon, they are not only lawful, but very uſeful to the Soul. God would not have us to be ſtupid and inſenſate, though he would have us to be meek and patient: in *Eph.* 4.26. He allows the natural motion, but forbids the ſinful exorbitancy. (2) Holy anger which is a pure flame, kindled by an heavenly ſpark of Love to God, and in Scripture is called zeal, which is (as one ſaith) the dagger which love draws in Gods quarrel. Such was *Lots* againſt the *Sodomites*, and that of *Moſes* againſt the Idolatrous *Iſraelites*: when *Servetus* condemned *Zwinglius* for his harſhneſs, his anſwer was, *in aliis manſuetus ero, in blaſphemiis in Chriſtum, non ita*; in other caſes I will be mild, but in the cauſe of Chriſt, not ſo. That which the World calls moderation and mildneſs here, is in Gods account ſtupidity and cowardlineſs, neither of theſe are that which I am now perſwading you to keep your hearts againſt. But (3) There is ſinfull paſſion, that's the thing which endangers you. Now anger becomes ſinful when

'tis either *Cauſeleſs*, Matth. 5. 22. *or exceſſive*, and that either in meaſure or time, exceeding the value of the impulſive cauſe, be it more tranſient or abideing, yet 'tis a ſin and is matter of humiliation before God. Now the means to keep the heart from it under provocations, are theſe.

1. Means. *Get low and humble thoughts of your ſelves, and then you will have meek Spirits, and peaceable deportments towards others.*

The humble is ever the patient man, pride is the root of paſſion, a lofty, will be a ſurly ſpirit: bladders blown up with wind, will not lye cloſe together: but prick them, and you may pack a thouſand in a ſmall room, *only by pride cometh contention*, Prov. 13. 10. When we over-rate our ſelves, then we think we are unworthily treated by others, and that provokes: and here (by the way) take notice of one great benefit of acquaintance with your own hearts, even the meekning and calming of our Spirits. Chriſtian, methinks thou ſhouldſt know ſo much by thy ſelf, that 'tis impoſſible any ſhould lay thee lower, or have baſer thoughts of thee than thou haſt of thy ſelf. Some render the original of that

text

text, *Hab.* 2. 5. *Thus the proud man is as he that transgresseth by wine,* and drunkards you know are quarelsome: O get more humility, and that will bring you more peace.

2. Means. *Be often sweetning your spirits in communion with God, and they will not easily be imbittered with wrath towards men.*

A quiet *Conscience* never produced an unquiet *conversation*: the peace of God doth βραβεύειν rule in the heart, as an Umpire in appeasing strifes, for so much that word, *Col.* 3. 15. imports, wrath and strife are hugely opposite to the frame and temper of a spiritual heart, because inconsistent with the delight and contentment of that Dove-like spirit, which loves a sedate and quiet breast. O saith a Soul that feeds upon the sweet Communion of the Spirit, shall the sparkles of provocations now catch in my passions, and raise such a smoke in my Soul as will offend and drive away the comforter from me? this is so effectual a remedy against passion, that I durst almost venture in a Christian of an hasty nature to make long suffering a sign of Communion with God. Seest thou such a Christian quiet and calm under pro-

vocations, 'tis very like his ſoul feeds upon ſuch ſweetneſs in God as he is loath to leave: and on the other ſide, ſeeſt thou a Chriſtian turbulent and clamorous, doubtleſs all is not well within: his Spirit is like a bone out of joynt, which cannot move without pain and trouble.

3. Mea. *Get due apprehenſions of the evil nature and effects of ſinful anger: Ira furor brevis, anger is a ſhort madneſs* (ſaith one) *Ira animæ febris* (ſaith another) anger is the feaver of the Soul: 'tis the interregnum and eclipſe of reaſon (ſaith a third.)

The effects of it alſo are very ſad.

(1) *It grieves the ſpirit of God*, Eph. 4. 30. Baniſhes him from that breaſt in which it rages and tumultuates, God is the God of peace; the preſence and comforts of God are only injoyed in a calm: 'tis a golden note one gives upon the forecited text. God doth not uſually bleſs with peace of Conſcience, ſuch as make no conſcience of peace. (2) It gives advantage to the Devil, *Eph.* 4. 26, 27. Satan is an angry and diſcontented Spirit, and finds no reſt but in reſtleſs hearts: he lives like the *Salamander* in fires of contention, he beſtirs himſelf when the Spirits are in a commotion, ſometimes he

fills

fills the heart with revengeful thoughts, ſometimes he fills the lips, and inflames the tongue with undecent language; even a meek *Moſes* ſometimes ſpake unadviſedly with his lips. (3) It diſ-tunes the Spirit for duty, upon this account the Apoſtle diſſwades husbands and wives from jarring carriages and contentions, that their prayers be not hindred, 1 *Pet.* 3. 7. All acts of worſhip muſt be ſutable to the object of worſhip: but God is the God of peace, the God of love. (4) To mention no more, it diſparages the Chriſtian Religion. How would *Plato* and *Pythagoras* ſhame us if they were now living: Chriſt was as a lamb for meekneſs, and doth it become his followers to be like Lyons? O keep your hearts, or you will at once loſe, not only your own peace, but the credit of religion.

4. Mea. *Conſider how ſweet a thing it is to a Chriſtian to conquer his corruptions, and carry away the ſpoils of them.*

He that is ſlow to anger, is better than the mighty, and he that ruleth his ſpirit, than he that taketh a City, Prov. 16. 32. Is there any content in venting a paſſion? how much more in mortifying it? when thou comeſt in a calm mood, or upon a death-bed to review thy life, how com-

fortable then will it be to reflect upon the conquests thou hast got by the fear of God over the evil propensions of thine own heart! 'twas a memorable saying of *Valentinian* the Emperour, when he came to dye: among all my Conquests (said he) there is but one that now comforts me; and being asked what that was, he answered, I have overcome my worst enemy, mine own naughty heart.

5. Mea. *Shame your selves by setting before you those eminent patterns that have been most excellent for meekness.*

Above all, compare your spirits with the spirit of Christ, *Learn of me* (saith he) *for I am meek and lowly*, Matth. 11. 29. Christ was meek and lowly, but I am proud and passionate, it was the high commendation of *Moses*, Numb. 12. 3. *Now the man Moses was meek above all the men of the earth: and this was the man that knew God face to face.* 'Tis said of *Calvin* and *Ursin* that they both were of cholerick natures, but yet had so learned the meekness of Christ, as not to utter one word under the greatest provocation unbeseeming Religion. When I read the pretty stories of the very Heathens, that never had the advantages we have, how the *Pythagorians*, what ever fewds had been

been among them in the day, would hush all, by sending to each other this message, *the Sun is almost set*; and that of *Plato* to his Scholar, *I would beat thee if I were not angry.*

When I read what lenity and tenderness *Lycurgus* shewed to an insolent fellow that had struck out one of his eyes; I am ashamed to see how much Christians are out shot by Heathens, who by meer moral arguments and precepts, had thus meekned their Spirits and conquered their passions: the dim light of nature could teach *Seneca* to say, that anger will hurt a man more than the offence; for there is a certain bound in the offence, but I know not how far mine anger will carry me. 'Tis a shame that these men who come so far behind us in means and advantages, should so far outstrip us in meekness and patience.

Means 6. Lastly, *Avoid all irritating occasions.*

He that will not hear the Clapper, must not pull the Rope: grievous words stir up anger (saith *Solomon*) *Prov.* 15. 1. Do not only pray, and resolve against it, but get as far as you can out of the way of it: 'tis true Spiritual Valour to run as fast, and as far as we can out of

sins

sins way: if you can but avoid anger in its first rise, there is no great fear of it afterwards; for it is not with this sin as it is with other sins; other sins grow to their full strength by degrees, their first motions are the weakest; but this sin is born in its full strength, 'tis strongest at first, withstand it then, and it falls before you. Thus learn to keep your hearts when provocations arise.

Season 9. The ninth Season of exerting our greatest diligence, " is the Crit-
" tical hour of temptation, wherein Sa-
" tan layes close *Siege* to the Fort-Royal
" of a Christians heart, and often sur-
" prizes it for want of watchfulness: to
" keep thy heart now, is no less a Mercy
" than a Duty; few Christians are so well
" skilled in detecting the fallacies, and re-
" torting the arguments by which Satan
" uses to draw them to sin, as to come
" off safe in those encounters: *Watch and*
" *Pray* (saith our Lord) *lest ye enter into*
" *temptation, Mark* 14. 38. Even an emi-
" nent *David*, and a wise *Solomon* have
" smarted for their carelesness at such a
" time as this. The ninth Case therefore
" shall be this,

Case 9. *How a Christian when strongly sollicited by the Devil to sin, may keep his heart*

heart from yielding to the temptation?

Now there are ſix ſpecial Arguments by which Satan ſubtilly inſinuates and winds in the temptation; in all which I ſhall offer thee ſome help for the keeping of thy heart, and the firſt is this,

Arg. 1. The firſt Argument is drawn from the pleaſure of ſin: O (ſaith Satan) here is pleaſure to be enjoyed; the temptation comes with a ſmiling countenance, and charming Voice: What, art thou ſo flegmatick and dull a ſoul, as not to feel the powerful charms of pleaſure? who can with-hold himſelf from ſuch delights?

Now thine heart may be kept from the danger of this temptation, by retorting this Argument of pleaſure upon the Tempter; which is done two waies.

1. Thou telleſt me Satan that ſin is pleaſant; be it ſo: but are the gripes of Conſcience, and the flames of Hell ſo too? Is it pleaſant to feel the wounds and throbs of Conſcience? If ſo, Why did *Peter* weep ſo bitterly, *Matth.* 26. 75. Why did *David* cry out of broken bones, *Pſal.* 51. I hear what thou ſayeſt of the pleaſure of ſin, and I have read what *David* hath ſaid of the terrible effects of ſin in his Pſalm, to bring to remembrance,

membrance, *Psal.* 38. *verse* 2. *Thine Arrows stick fast in me, and thy Hand presseth me sore*: ver. 3. *There is no soundness in my flesh because of thine anger; neither is there any rest in my bones because of my sin*: verse 4. *For mine iniquities are gone over mine head as an heavy burden; they are too heavy for me*: verse 5. *My wounds stink and are corrupt, because of my foolishness*: verse 6. *I am troubled, I am bowed down greatly, I go mourning all the day long*: verse 7. *My loyns are filled with a loathsom Disease, and there is no soundness in my flesh*: Verse 8. *I am feeble and sore broken, I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart.*

Here I see the true face of sin, if I yield to thy temptation, I must either feel these pangs of Conscience, or the flames of Hell.

2. What talkest thou of the pleasure of sin, when by experience I know there is more true pleasure in the mortification, than can be in the commission of sin. O how sweet is it to please God, to obey Conscience, to preserve inward Peace, to be able to say, in this tryal I have discovered the sincerity of my heart; now I know I fear the Lord, now I see that I truly hate sin. Hath sin any

such

ſuch delight as this? this will choak that temptation.

Arg. 2. The ſecond Argument is drawn from the Secreſy of ſin: O (ſaith Satan, this ſin will never diſgrace thee abroad, none ſhall know it.

This Argument may be retorted, and the heart ſecured thus: Thou ſayeſt, none ſhall know it; but Satan, canſt thou find a place void of the Divine Preſence for me to ſin in? Thus *Job* ſecured his heart from this temptation, *Job* 31. 4. *Doth he not ſee my waies, and count all my ſteps?* therefore he makes a Covenant with his eyes, *verſe* 1. After the ſame manner *Solomon* teaches us to retort this temptation, *Prov.* 5. 20 21. *And why my Son wilt thou be raviſhed with a ſtrange Woman, and embrace the boſome of a ſtranger? For the waies of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all his goings.* What if I hide it from the eyes of all the world for the preſent, I cannot hide it from God; and the time is at hand, when all the world ſhall know it too; for the Word aſſures me, *Luke* 8. 17. *That what is done now in ſecret, ſhall be proclaimed as upon the houſe top.* Beſides, is not my Conſcience as a thouſand witneſſes? Do I owe no reverence to my ſelf? could the Heathen man

man say, *turpe quid ausurus, te sine teste time*, when thou art tempted to commit sin, fear thy self without any other witness: and shall not I be afraid to sin before mine own Conscience, which alwaies hath a reproof in its mouth, or a pen in its hand, to record my most secret actions?

Arg. 3. The third Argument by which Satan tempteth to sin, is taken from the gain and profit arising out of it: Why so nice and scrupulous? 'tis but stretch Conscience a little, and thou maist make thy self; Now is thy opportunity.

The heart may be kept from falling into this dangerous snare, by retorting the temptation thus: But what profit will it be if a man should gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? *Mat.* 16. 26. O my soul, my precious soul! shall I hazard thee for all the good that is in this world? There is an immortal spirit dwelling in this fleshly Tabernacle, of more value than all earthly things, which must live to all eternity, when this world shall lye in white ashes: A soul for which Jesus Christ shed his precious and invaluable blood: I was sent into this world to provide

vide for this ſoul; indeed God hath alſo committed to me the care of my body, but (as one happily expreſſes it) with this difference; a Maſter commits two things to a Servant, the Child, and the Childs cloaths: will the Maſter thank the Servant, if he plead, I have kept the cloaths, but I have neglected the life of the Child. *Goſpel Glaſs p.* 3.

Arg. 4. The fourth Argument is drawn from the ſmalneſs of the ſin; 'Tis but a little one, a ſmall matter, a trifle; who would ſtand upon ſuch niceties?

This Argument may be retorted three waies.

1. But is the Majeſty of Heaven a little one too? If I commit this ſin, I muſt offend and wrong a great God, *Iſa.* 40. 15, 16, 17, 22.

2. Is there any little Hell to torment little ſinners in? Are not the leaſt ſinners there filled with the fulneſs of wrath? O there is great wrath treaſured up for ſuch as the world counts little ſinners.

3. The leſs the ſin, the leſs the inducement to commit it: What, ſhall I break with God for a trifle? deſtroy my peace, wound my Conſcience, grieve the Spirit, and all this for nothing? Oh what madneſs is this?

Arg. 5.

Arg. 5. A fifth Argument is drawn from the Grace of God, and hopes of pardon: Come, God will pass by this as an infirmity, he will not be extream to mark it.

But stay my heart,

1. Where do I find a promise of mercy to presumptuous sinners? indeed for involuntary surprisals, unavoidable and lamented infirmities, there is a pardon of course, but where is the promise to a daring sinner, that sins upon a presumption of pardon? Pause a while my soul upon that Scripture, *Numb.* 15. 27, 30. *And if a Soul sin through ignorance, then he shall bring a She-Goat, of the first year for a Sin-offering, &c. But the Soul that doth ought presumptuously, the same reproacheth the Lord, and that soul shall be cut off from among his people.*

2. If God be a God of so much mercy, how can I abuse so good a God? Shall I take so glorious an attribute as the mercy of God is, and abuse it unto sin? shall I wrong him because he is good? or should not rather the goodness of God lead me to repentance, *Rom.* 2. 4. *There is mercy with thee, that thou maiest be feared, Psal.* 130. 4.

Arg. 6. Lastly, Sometimes Satan incourages

courages to sin from the examples of good and holy men, thus, and thus they have sinned, and been restored, therefore this may consist with grace; and thou be saved nevertheless. The danger of this temptation is avoided, and the heart secured; by retorting the argument these three ways.

1. Though good men may commit the same sin materially, which I am tempted to, yet did ever any good man venture to sin, upon such a ground and incouragement as this?

2. Did God record these examples for my imitation, or for my warning? are they not set up as sea marks, that I might avoid the rocks upon which they split? *1 Cor.* 10. 6. *now these were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.*

3. Am I willing to feel what they felt for sin? O I dare not follow them in the ways of sin! *quia me vestigia terrent*; Least God plunge me into the deeps of horrour, into which he cast them.

Thus learn to keep your hearts in the hour of temptation to sin.

10. *Season.* The tenth special season "to keep the heart with all diligence, "is the time of spiritual darkness and

" doubting when it is with the Soul, as " it was with *Paul* in his dangerous voy- " age, neither sun, nor moon, nor star " appears for many days: when by rea- " son of the hidings of Gods face, the " prevalency of corruption, and the in- " evidence of grace; the Soul is even " ready to give up all its hopes and com- " forts for lost; to draw sad and despe- " rate conclusions upon it self; to call " its former comforts vain delusions; " its grace hypocrisie. When the se- " rene and clear Heavens are overcast " with dark clouds, yea filled with thun- " ders; and horrible tempests; when " the poor pensive Soul sits down and " weeps forth this sad lamentation, *my* " *hope is perished from the Lord!* now to " keep the heart from sinking in such a " day as this, to enable it to maintain " its own sincerity, is a matter of great " difficulty. The tenth Case then will " be this.

Case 10. *How the people of God in dark and doubting seasons, may keep their hearts from entertaining such sad conclusions about their estates, as destroy their peace, and unfit them for their Duty.*

There are two general heads, to which the grounds of doubting our sincerity may

may be reduced. (1) Gods carriage towards the Soul, either in the time of some *extraordinary affliction*, or of some long and *sad desertion*. Or, (2) The souls carriage towards God: And here it usually argues against the truth of its own graces, either (1) From its relapses into the same sins, from which it hath formerly risen, with shame and sorrow. Or, (2) From the sensible declining of its affections from God. Or, (3) From the excess of the affections towards creature-comforts and enjoyments. Or, (4) From its enlargements in publick, and often straitnings in private Duties. Or, (5) From some horrid injections of Satan, with which the soul is greatly perplexed. Or, Lastly, From Gods silence, and seeming denial of its long depending Suits and Prayers.

These are the common grounds of those sad conclusions: Now in order to the establishment and support of the heart in this condition it will be necessary.

1. That you be acquainted with some general Truths, which have a tendency to the settlement of a trembling and doubting Soul.

2. That you be rightly instructed a-

bout the forementioned Particulars, which are the grounds of your doubting.

The general truths requisite for poor doubting souls to be acquainted with, are these:

1. *That every working and appearance of hypocrisie doth not presently prove the person in whom it is to be an hypocrite.* You must carefully distinguish between the *presence* and *predominancy* of hypocrisie: there are remains of deceitfulness in the best hearts. *David* and *Peter* had sad experience of it, yet the standing frame and general bent of the heart being upright; it did not denominate them hypocrites.

2. *That we ought as well to hear what can be said for us, as against us*: It is the sin of upright hearts sometimes to use an over rigid, and mercilesse severity against themselves: they do not indifferently consider the case of their own souls: it is in this case, as *Solomon* speaks in another, *Prov.* 13.7. *There is that maketh himself rich, and yet hath nothing; and there is that maketh himself poor, and yet hath great riches.* 'Tis the damning sin of the self flattering hypocrite, to make his condition better then 'tis: and it is the sin and folly of some upright ones

ones to make their condition worse then indeed it is. Why should you be such enemies to your own peace? to read over the evidences of Gods love to your Souls, as a man doth a book which he intends to confute? why doe you study to find evasions, to turn off those comforts which are due to you? 'tis said of *Joseph* that he was minded to put away his espoused *Mary*, not knowing that that holy thing which was conceived in her, was by the holy ghost: and this may be your case. A third truth is this.

3. *That many a Saint hath charged and condemned himself for that, which God will never charge him with, nor condemn him for.* Why hast thou hardned our heart from thy fear (saith the Church, *Isai.* 63. 17. and yet the verse before manifests, that their hearts were not so hardned: godly *Bradford* wrote himself an hypocrite, a painted sepulchre; yet doubtless God acquitted him of that charge.

4. *Every thing which is a ground of grief to the people of God, is not a sufficient ground of questioning their sincerity.* There are many more things to *trouble* you then there are to *stumble* you: if upon every slip and failing through infirmity, you should question all that ever was

wrought upon you your life must be made up of doubtings and fears: you can never attain a setled peace, nor live that life of praise and thankfulness, the gospel calls for.

5. *The Soul is not at all times fit to pass judgment upon its own condition:* To be sure in the dark day of desertion, when the Soul is benighted; and in the stormy day of temptation, when the Soul is in a hurry; 'tis utterly unfit to judge its estate: examine your hearts upon your beds, and be still, *Psal.* 4. This is rather a season for watching and resisting, then for judging, and determining.

6. *That every breach of peace with God, is not a breach of Covenant with God:* The wife hath many weaknesses and failings, often grieves and displeases her husband; yet in the main is faithful, and truly loves him: these failings may cause him to alter his carriage, but not to withdraw his love, or deny his relation. *Return O backsliding Israel for I am married unto you.*

7. *Lastly, what ever our sin, or trouble be, it should rather drive us to God, then from God.* Pardon my sin for it is great, *Psal.* 25.11. Suppose it be true, that thou hast so, and so sinned, that thou art thus long and sadly deserted; yet 'tis a false inference,

inference, that therefore thou ſhouldeſt be diſcouraged, as if there were no help for thee in thy God. When you have well digeſted theſe ſeven eſtabliſhing truths, if ſtill the doubt remain; then conſider, what may be replyed to the particular grounds of thoſe doubts. As,

1. You doubt, and are ready to conclude the Lord hath no regard or love for your Souls, becauſe of ſome extraordinary affliction which is come upon you: but I would not have thy Soul ſo to conclude till thou be able ſatisfactorily to anſwer thoſe three queſtions.

1. *Queſt.* If great troubles and afflictions be marks of Gods hatred, why ſhould not impunity and conſtant proſperity be tokens of his love? for *contrariorum contraria eſt ratio & conſequentia*: of contrary things, there is a contrary reaſon and conſequence: but is this ſo indeed? or ſaith not the ſcripture quite otherwiſe? *Prov.* 1. 32. *The proſperity of fools deſtroy them.* So *Pſal.* 73. 5.

2. *Queſt.* Dare I draw the ſame concluſion upon all others that have been as much, yea more afflicted then my ſelf? if this argument conclude againſt thee, then ſo it doth againſt every one in thy condition; yea, the greater the affliction

of any Child of God hath been, the more strongly the argument still concludes: and then wo to *David*, *Job*, *Heman*, *Paul*, and all that have been afflicted as they were.

3. *Quest.* Had God exempted you only from those troubles, which all other his people feel, would not that have been a greater ground of doubting to you then this? especially since the scripture saith, *Heb.* 12. 8. *If ye be without chastnings whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards; and not sons.*

O how is our Father put to it by froward Children! if he afflicts, then one crys he loves me not: if he exempt from affliction, others question his love upon that ground. Surely you have other work to do under the rod then this.

2. Or do you rashly infer the Lord hath no love for you, because he hides his face from you, that your condition is miserable because dark and uncomfortable, before you draw such rash conclusions, see what answer you can give to these 4. following queries.

1. Quer. *If any action of God towards his people will bear a favourable, as well as an harsh and severe construction, why should not his people interpret it in the best sense?*

And

And is not this such? may he not have a design of love as well as of hatred in this dispensation? may he not depart for a season, and not for ever, yea, that he might not depart for ever? you are not the first that have mistaken Gods ends in desertion, *Isai.* 49. 14. *Sion said the Lord hath forsaken me, my God hath forgotten me*: was it so indeed? nothing less *v.* 15. can a mother forget, *&c.*

2. Quer. *Do you find the marks of an absolute total and final desertion upon your own Spirits, that you are so apt to conclude yours to be such?* Do you find your heart inclined to forsake God? have you lost your conscientious tenderness in point of sin? if so, Sad characters appear upon you indeed: but if in this dark hour you are as tender of sin as ever, as much resolved to cleave to God as ever; I cannot, I will not forsake God, let him do what he will with me, oh no I cannot. If your hearts work thus, it can be but a partial, limited and temporary desertion; by this he still keeps his interest in your hearts, a sure sign he will return and visit you again.

3. Quer. *Is sence and feeling a competent judge of Gods actions and designs.* Or may a man safely rely upon its testimony after

after so many discoveries of the fallibility of it? is this a sound argument? if God had any love for my Soul, if it were not quite gone, I should feel it now as well as in former times; but I cannot feel it, therefore its quite gone. Do not you know the Sun still keeps on his course in the Heavens even in full and close weather, when you cannot see it? and may it not be so with the love of God? read *Isai.* 50. 10. may I not as well conclude in winter when the flowers have hid their beautiful heads under ground, they are quite dead and gone, because I cannot find them in *December*, where I saw them in *May*?

4. *Quer.* Think you the Lord cares not to break his childrens hearts, and his own promise too? hath he no more regard to either? if he return no more, these must be the consequents, *Isai.* 57. 16, 17. *Heb.* 13. 5.

Well then, from Gods carriage towards you either in affliction or desertion, no such discouraging, heart sinking conclusions can be inferr'd. Next let us see whether they may not be inferr'd from our carriage towards God: and here the principal grounds of doubting are such as these.

1. I have fallen again into the same sin from which I have formerly risen with repentance and resolution, therefore my sinning is customary sinning, a spot that is not the spot of Gods children: hence, the upright Soul trembles, upon this tis ready to affirm that all its former humiliations for, and oppositions unto sin, were but acts of hypocrisie. But stay poor trembling heart.

1. Quer. *If this be so, how comes it to pass that Christ put such a favourable construction upon the Disciples sleeping the third time, when he had as often reproved them for it?* *Matth.* 26.40, 41. And how is it that we find in Scripture so many promises made not only to the first sins, but also to the backslidings of Gods people, *Jer.* 3.22. *Hose.* 14.4.

2. Quer. *Is not your repentance and care renued, as often as your guilt is renued?* Yea the oftner you sin the more you are troubled? it is not so in customary sinning, the rise whereof *Bernard* excellently discovers (1) (saith he) when a man accustomed to good sinneth grievously, it seems importable, yea he seems to descend alive into hell. (2) In process of time it seems not importable,

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ble, but heavy; and betwixt importable and heavy there is no small descent. (3) Next it becomes light, his conscience smites but faintly, and he feels not the stripes of it. (4) Then there is not only a total insensibleness of it, but that which was bitter and displeasing, is now become sweet and pleasing in some degree. (5) Then tis turned into custom, and not only pleases, but daily pleases. Lastly custom is turned into nature, he cannot be pull'd away from it; but defends and pleads for it: this is customary sinning this is the way of the wicked; but the quite contrary is our condition.

3. Quer. *Are you sure from Scripture grounds that a good man may not relapse again and again into the same sin?* 'Tis true, as for gross sins, they do not use to relapse into them. *David* committed adultery no more, *Paul* persecuted the Church no more, *Peter* denyed Christ no more, but I speak of ordinary infirmities: *Jobs* friends were good men, yet (saith he) *Chap.* 19. 3. *These ten times have ye reproached me.* So then no such conclusions follow from this first ground of doubting.

2. *The second ground is, the declining and withering of our affections to spiritual things.*

things, O saith the upright Soul, if ever I had been planted a right seed, I should have been as a green olive tree in the house of my God: but my branches wither, therefore my root is naught. But stay,

1. Quer. *May you not be mistaken about the decay of grace, and fading of your affections?* What if they be not so quick and ravishing as at first? may not that be recompensed in the spirituality and solidity of them now? 1 *Phil.* 9. *I pray God your love may abound more and more in all judgment*: it may be more *solid*, though not so *fervorous*: or do you not mistake by looking forward to what you would be, rather then backward to what once you were? 'tis a good note of *Ames*: we discern the growth of grace, as the growth of plants, which we perceive rather *crevisse quam crescere*, to have grown, then to grow.

(2. *Quer.*) But grant it be so indeed as you affirm, must it needs follow, that the root of the matter is not in you? *Davids* last waies are distinguished from his first, 2 *Chr.* 17. 3. and yet both first and last, a holy man. The Church of *Ephesus* is charged by Christ for leaving her first love; and yet a golden Candlestick, many

many precious Saints in that Church, *Rev.* 2. 2, 3, 4.

3. A third ground of these sad conclusions is, the excess of our affections to some creature injoyments. I fear I love the creature more than God, and if so, my love is but hypocritical. I sometimes feel stronger, and more sensible motions of my heart to some earthly comforts, then I do to heavenly objects: therefore my Soul is not upright in me. But stay Soul,

(1. Quer. *May not a man love God more solidly and strongly, then the Creature, and yet his affections to the creatures be sometimes moved more violently and sensibly then toward God?* as rooted malice argues a stronger hatred, then a sudden, though more violent passion; so we must measure our love, not by a violent motion of it, now and then, but by the depth of the root, and constancy of its actings: because *David* was so passionately moved for *Absalom*, *Joab* concludes that if he had lived, and all the people dyed; *it would have pleased him well* 2 *Sam.* 19. 7. but that was argued more like a *Souldier* then a *Logician.*

(2. Quer.) *If you indeed love the creature for its self, if you make it your end, and*

religion

religion but a means, then the conclusion is rightly drawn upon you. But if you love the creature in reference to God, and see nothing in it seperated from him, though sometimes your affections offend in the excels: this is consistent with sincere love to God. To love the creature inordinately (i. e.) to put it in Gods room, and make it a mans end; this is the love of a carnal heart: to love it immoderately, that is, to let out more affection to it then we ought, is sometimes the sin of the best hearts.

(3. Quer.) *Have not many Souls feared as you do, that when Christ and creatures should stand as competitors in some eminent tryal they should forsake Christ rather then the creature, and yet when brought to that Dilemma have been able to cast all the world at their heels for Christ?* Many of the *Martyrs* had such fears, and thus they were satisfied: the prevalency of love is best seen at parting: there may be more love to Christ in thy Soul then thou art now aware of; and if God bring thee to such a pinch thou mayest see it.

4. A fourth ground of these sad conclusions is from hence, that we find our hearts sometimes more straitned in private, then in publick duties. Oh if my Soul

Soul were sincere, its actings in duty would be uniform. I fear I am but a *Pharisee* upon this ground: 'tis sad indeed we should at any time find our hearts straitned in private. But,

1. Quer. *Do not all thine inlargements in duty whether publick, or private depend upon the Spirit, who is the Lord of influences, and according as he gives out, or holds back those influences, so art thou inlarged or straitned?* And what if sometimes he please to give that in a publick, which he with-holds in a private duty, as long as thy Soul is satisfied in neither without Communion with God, and the straitness of thy heart is indeed its burden; doth that argue thee to be an hypocrite?

(2. Quer.) *Dost thou not make Conscience of private duties, and set thy self as before the Lord in them?* Indeed, if thou live in the constant neglect, or careless performance of them, if thou art *curious* about publick, and *careless* about private duties, that would be a sad sign: but when you have conscientiously performed and often met with God in them, it will not follow you are insincere, because that communion is sometimes interrupted. Besides.

(3. Quer.)

(3. Quer.) *May there not be ſomething at ſometimes in a publick, which is wanting in a private duty to raiſe and advantage thine affections.* God may ſometimes make uſe of the melting affections of them with whom thou heareſt or prayeſt, as petty inſtruments to move thy affections; this advantage is wanting in private, therefore from hence (the caſe ſo ſtanding) no ſuch inferrence can be drawn.

5. Another ground is from thoſe horrid injections of Satan, with which the Soul is greatly perplexed; by theſe I may ſee what an heart I have: can grace be where theſe are?

Yes, grace may be where ſuch thoughts are, though not where they are lodged and conſented to: doſt thou cry out under the burden, enter thy proteſt in Heaven againſt them, ſtrive to keep up holy and reverend thoughts of God? then tis a *rape*, not a voluntary *proſtitution*.

6. The laſt ground of theſe ſad concluſions is the Lords long ſilence, and ſeeming denyal of our long depending ſuits and prayers. O if God had any regard to my Soul, he would have heard my cryes before now! but I have no anſwer from him, therefore no intereſt in him. But ſtay doubting Soul,

(1. Quer.) *Have not many Saints stumbled upon this stone before thee?* Psal. 31.22. *I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes: nevertheless thou hearedst the voice of my supplication.* So the Church *Lam.* 3.44. Thou covereſt thy ſelf with a cloud, that our prayers ſhould not paſs through. *Jonah* 2.4. Then ſaid I, I am caſt out of thy ſight, and may not you be miſtaken in this matter as well as they?

2. *Quer.* Though Gods abhorring, and final rejecting prayer be an argument of his abhorring the perſon that prayes; yet dare we conclude ſo from a meere ſuſpenſion of the anſwer? *God may bear long with his own elect, that cry unto him day and night,* Luk. 18.7.

3. Quer. *Can you deny but that there are ſome ſigns appearing in your Souls, even whileſt God ſuſpends his anſwer that argue your prayers are not rejected by him?* as (1) Though no anſwer come, yet you are ſtill reſolved to wait: you dare not ſay as that prophane wretch did, 2 *Kings* 6.33. *This evil is of the Lord, why ſhould I wait for him any longer?* (2) You can clear and juſtifie God ſtill, and lay the reaſon and cauſe of his ſilence upon your ſelves. So did *David, Pſal.* 22.2,3. *O*

my

my God, I cry in the day time, and thou heareſt not; and in the night, and am not ſilent, but thou art holy, &c. (3) The ſuſpenſion of Gods anſwer makes you inquiſitive into your own hearts, what evils are there that obſtruct your prayers? So the Church, *Lam.* 3. 8. *He ſhutteth out my prayer*: and how doth this work? you may ſee, *v.* 40. *Let us ſearch and try our ways*: well then, neither from hence may you conclude that God hath no love for your Souls.

And thus I have ſhewn you, how to keep your hearts in a dark and doubting ſeaſon from thoſe deſperate concluſions of unbelief. God forbid any falſe heart ſhould incourage it ſelf from theſe things, tis our unhappi- *Caution.* neſs that when we give Saints and ſinners their proper portions, that each of them are ſo prone to take up the others part.

11. *Seaſon.* The eleventh ſpecial ſea- "ſon calling for this diligence to keep "our hearts is, when ſufferings for Reli- "gion come to an height; then look to "your hearts: *Matth.* 24. 8, 9, 10. *All "theſe are the beginning of ſorrows, and "they ſhall deliver you up to be afflicted, and "ſhall kill you; and ye ſhall be hated of all*

" *nations for my names sake: and* THEN
" *shall many be offended.* When sufferings
" for religion grow hot, then blessed is he
" that is not offended in Christ, troubles
" are then at an height. (1) When a
" mans neerest friends and relations for-
" sake and leave him, *Micah* 7. 5, 6.
" 2 *Tim.* 4. 16. When a man is ingaged
" alone (2) When it comes to resisting
" to blood, *Heb.* 12. 4. (3) When tempta-
" tions are presented to us in our suffer-
" ings, *Heb.* 11. 37. (4) When eminent
" persons for profession turn aside, and
" desert the cause of Christ, 2 *Tim.* 2. 19.
" (5) When God hides his face in a suf-
" fering hour, *Jer.* 17. 17. (6) When
" Satan falls upon us with strong tem-
" ptations to question the grounds of our
" sufferings, or the Souls interest in
" Christ: Now tis heard to keep the heart
" from turning back, and the steps from
" declining Gods ways. The eleventh
" question then shall be this.

11. Case. *How the heart may be kept from relapsing under the greatest sufferings for religion?* If the bitterness of sufferings at any time cause thy Soul to distaste the way of God and take up thoughts of forsaking it, stay thine heart under that temptation by propounding these 8. questions solemnly to it. 1. Quest.

1. Queſt. *What reproach and diſhonour ſhall I pour upon Chriſt and religion by deſerting him at ſuch a time as this?* This will proclaim to all the world that how much ſoever I have boaſted of the promiſes, yet when it comes to the tryal, I dare hazard nothing upon the credit of them: and how will this open the mouths of Chriſts enemies to blaſpheme? O better I had never been born then that worthy name ſhould be blaſphemed through me! ſhall I furniſh the triumphs of the uncircumciſed? ſhall I make mirth in Hell? O if I did but value the name of Chriſt as much as many a wicked man values his own name! I would never endure to ſee it expoſed to ſuch contempt will proud duſt and aſhes venture death, yea Hell, rather then a blot upon their name? and ſhall I venture nothing to ſalve the honour and reputation of Chriſt?

2. Queſt. *Dare I violate my conſcience to ſave my fleſh? who ſhall comfort me when conſcience wounds me?* What comfort is there in life, liberty, or friends, when peace is taken away from the inner man? when *Conſtantius* threatned to cut off *Samoſatenus* his right hand if he would not ſubſcribe ſomewhat that was againſt

his conscience, he held up both his hands to the messenger that was sent, saying, he shall cut off both rather then I will do it: farewel all peace, joy and comfort, from that day forward; had *Zimri* peace that slew his master? said *Jezebel*, so say I here, had *Judas* peace? had *Spira* peace? and shall you have peace if you tread in their steps? O consider what you do!

3. Quest. *Is not the publick interest of Christ and religion infinitely more, then any private interest of my own?* Tis a famous passage that of *Terentius* Captain to *Adrian* the *Emperour*, he presented a petition to *Adrian* that the Christians might have a temple by themselves to worship God apart from the *Arrians*: the *Emperour* tore his petition and threw it away, bidding him to aske somewhat for himself, and it should be granted: but he modestly gathered up the pieces of his petition again and told him, *if he could not be heard in Gods cause, he would never ask any thing for himself*: Yea even *Tully*, though an *Heathen* could say, *ne immortalitatem quidem contra rem publicam*: he would not accept even of immortality it self against the Common-wealth. O if we had more publick, we should not have

have ſuch cowardly ſpirits.

4. Qu. *Did Jeſus Chriſt ſerve me ſo? when for my ſake he expoſed himſelf to far greater ſufferings than can be before me?* His ſufferings were great indeed, he ſuffered from all *hands*, in all his *offices* in every member, not only in his body, but in his Soul; yea the ſufferings of his Soul, were the very Soul of his ſufferings: witneſs the bloody ſweat in the garden, witneſs the heart melting and heaven rending outcry upon the croſs, *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* and yet he flinched not, *he endured the croſs, deſpiſing the ſhame.* Alas! what are my ſufferings compared with Chriſts? he hath drunk up all that vinegar and gall that would make my ſufferings bitter. When one of the *Martyrs* was asked, why he was ſo merry at his death? Oh ſaid he! it is becauſe the Soul of Chriſt was ſo heavy at his death: did Chriſt bear ſuch a burden for me, with unbroken patience, and conſtancy? and ſhall I ſhrink back for momentary and light afflictions for him?

5. Qu. *Is not eternal life worth the ſuffering of a moments pain?* If I ſuffer with him, I ſhall raign with him. O how will men venture life and limb for a fading

crown ſwim through ſeas of blood to a throne? and will I venture nothing? ſuffer nothing for the Crown of Glory that fadeth not away? my dog will follow my horſes heels from morning to night, take many a weary ſtep through mire and dirt, rather then leave me, though at night all he gets by it is but bones and blows. If my Soul had any true greatneſs, any ſparks of generoſity in it, how would it deſpiſe the ſufferings of the way, for the glory of the end! how would it break down all difficulties before it, whileſt by an eye of faith it ſees the forerunner who is already entred ſtanding as it were upon the walls of Heaven, with the Crown in his hand, ſaying, he that overcometh ſhall inherit all things: come on then, my Soul come on! there is eternal life laid up for them that by patient continuance in well doing, ſeek for glory, honour and immortality. *Rom.* 2. 7.

6. Qu. *Can I ſo eaſily caſt off the ſociety and company of the Saints, and give the right hand of fellowſhip to the wicked?* How can I part with ſuch lovely companions as theſe have been? how often have I been benefited by their counſels? *Ezra* 10. 3. how often refreſhed, warmed, and quickned

quickned by their company? *Eccles.* 4. 10, 11. How often have I fasted and prayed with them? what sweet counsel have I taken with them? and gone to the house of God in company: and shall I now shake hands with them and say, farewell all ye Saints for ever, I shall never be among you more; come drunkards, swearers, blasphemers, persecutors, you shall be my everlasting companions. O rather, let my body and Soul be rent a sunder, then that ever I should say thus to the excellent of the earth in whom is all my delight,

Quest. 7. *Have I seriously considered the terrible Scripture Comminations against back-sliders?* O my heart! darest thou turn back upon the very points of such threatnings as these? *Jer.* 17, 5, 6. *Thus saith the Lord, cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm; and whose heart departeth from the Lord, for he shall be like the Heath in the Desart, and shall not see when good cometh*; (i. e.) *the curse of God shall wither him root and branch:* And Heb. 14. 26, 27. *If we sin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more Sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of Judgement, and fiery indignation which shall de-*

vour

vour the adverſaries: And again, verſe 38. *If any man draw back, my ſoul ſhall have no pleaſure in him*: as if he ſhould ſay, *take him World, take him Devil for your own, I have no delight in him.* O who dare draw back, when God hath hedged up the way with ſuch terrible threats as theſe!

Queſt. 8. *Can I look Chriſt in the face at the Day of Judgment, if I deſert him now?*

He that is aſhamed of me and of my words, in this adulterous and ſinful Generation, of him ſhall the Son of man be aſhamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy Angels, Mark 8. 38. Yet a little while, and you ſhall ſee the ſign of the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with Power and great Glory: the laſt Trump ſhall ſound, the dead, both ſmall and great, even all that ſleep in the duſt ſhall awake, and come before that great white Throne, on which Chriſt ſhall ſit in that day. And now do but imagine thou ſaw'ſt the trembling knees, and quivering lips of guilty ſinners; imagine thou heardeſt the dreadful ſentence of the Judge upon them, *Go ye curſed*, &c. and then a cry, the weeping, wailing, and wringing of hands, that there

ſhall

ſhall be: wouldſt thou deſert Chriſt now to protract a poor, miſerable life on earth? If the word of God be true, if the ſayings of Chriſt be ſealed and faithful, this ſhall be the portion of the Apoſtate: 'Tis an eaſie thing to ſtop the mouth of Conſcience now, but will it be eaſie to ſtop the mouth of the Judge then? Thus keep thy heart, that *it depart not from the living God.*

Seaſ. 12. The twelfth ſeaſon of looking diligently to our hearts, and keeping them with greateſt care, is the time of ſickneſs: "When a Child of God draws "nigh to eternity; when there are but "a few ſands more in the upper part of "his Glaſs to run down; Now *Satan* bu- "ſily beſtirs himſelf: of him it may be "ſaid, as of the natural Serpent, *nunquam "niſi moriens producitur in longum*; he is "never ſeen at his full length till dying: "and now his great deſigne, ſince he "cannot win the ſoul from God; is to "diſcourage, and make it unwilling to "go to God: though the gracious ſoul "with *Jacob* ſhould then rouſe up its ſelf "upon a dying bed, and rejoyce that the "marriage day of the Lamb is now al- "moſt come; though it ſhould then ſay, "with dying *Auſten*: *Vivere reſino ut Chriſto*

"*Christo vivam*, I despise life to be with "Christ. Or as dying *Milius*, when one "asked him whether he were willing to "dye? O said he! *Illius est nolle mori "qui nolit ire ad Christum*; let him be un- "willing to dye, who is unwilling to go "to Christ. But O! what shrinking from "death? What loathness to depart? "may sometimes (indeed too frequent- "ly) be observed in the people of God: "How loath are some of them to take "Death by the cold hand? If such a li- "berty were indulged to us, not to be "dissolved till we dissolve our selves; "when should we say with S. *Paul, I de- "sire to be dissolved?* Well then, the last "Case shall be this:

Case 12. *How the people of God in times of sickness may get their hearts loose from all earthly ingagements, and perswade them into a willingness to dye.*

And there are seven arguments which I shall urge upon the people of God at such a time as this to make them cheerfully entertain the messengers of death, and dye as well as live like Saints; and the first is this.

1. Argu. *First the harmlesness of death to the people of God.* Though it keep its *dart*, it hath lost its sting: a Saint (to allude

allude to that, *Iſai.* 11. 8.) *May play upon the hole of this aſpe, and put his hand into the Cockatrices den.* Death is the Cockatrice, or Aſpe; the grave is his hole or den: a Saint need not fear to put his hand boldly into it: it hath left and loſt its ſting in the ſides of Chriſt; 1 *Cor.* 15. 55. *O death! where is thy ſting?* why art thou afraid? O Saint! that this ſickneſs may be thy death, as long as thou knoweſt that the death of Chriſt is the death of death? indeed, if thou didſt dye in thy ſins as *Joh.* 8. 21. If death as a King did reign over thee, *Rom.* 5. 14. if it could feed upon thee, as the Lyon doth upon the prey he hath taken, as *Pſal.* 49. 14. *If hell followed the pale horſe as it is, Rev.* 6. 8. Then thou mighteſt well ſtartle and ſhrink back from it; but when God hath put away thy ſins from thee, *as far as the Eaſt is from the Weſt, Pſal.* 103. 12. As long as there is no other evil left in death, for thee to encounter with; but bodily pain: as long as the Scriptures repreſent it to thee under ſuch harmleſs and eaſy notions, as the putting off thy cloaths, 2 *Cor.* 5. 2. *And lying down to ſleep upon thy bed, Iſai.* 57. 2. Why ſhouldeſt thou be afraid? there is as much difference betwixt death to the people of God,

God, and others; as betwixt the *Unicorns* horn when it is upon the head of that fierce beast, and when it is in the *Apothecaries* shops; where it is made salubrious and medicinal.

2. Arg. *Thy heart may be kept from shrinking back at such a time as this, by considering the necessity of death; in order to the full fruition of God.*

Whether thou art willing to dye or no I assure thee, there is no other way to obtain the full satisfaction of thy Soul; and compleat its happiness: till the hand of death do thee the kind office to draw aside the curtain of flesh, thy Soul cannot see God: this animal life stands betwixt him and thee, 2 *Cor.* 5. 6. *Whilest we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord.* Thy body must be refined and cast into a new mould, else that new wine of heavenly glory would break it. *Paul* in his highest rapture, 2 *Cor.* 12. 4. when he heard things unutterable, was then but as a stander by, a looker on; not admitted into the company, as one of them; but as the Angels are in our assemblies, so was *Paul* in that glorious assembly above: and no otherwise; and yet even for this he must as it were be taken out of the body, uncloathed for a little

little time; to have a glimpſe of that glory, and then put on his cloathes again. O then! Who would not be willing to dye for a full ſight and enjoyment of God? Methinks, thy ſoul ſhould look and ſigh like a Priſoner through the Grates of this Mortality; *O that I had wings like a Dove, then would I fly away, and be at reſt*: Moſt men need patience to dye, but a Saint that underſtands what death admits him to, ſhould rather need patience to live; methinks, he ſhould often look out, and liſten on a death-bed for his Lords coming; and when he receives the news of his approaching change, ſhould ſay; *The voice of my Beloved, behold he cometh leaping over the Mountains, skipping over the Hills*, Cant. 2. 8.

Arg. 3. *Another Argument perſwading to this willingneſs is, the immediate ſucceſſion of a more excellent and glorious life.*

'Tis but wink, and you ſhall ſee God: your happineſs ſhall not be deferred till the Reſurrection; but as ſoon as the body is dead, the gracious ſoul is ſwallowed up in Life, *Rom.* 8. 10, 11. When once you have looſed from this ſhore, in a few moments, your ſouls will be wafted over upon the wings of Angels, to the other

other shore of a glorious eternity. *Phil.* 1. 23. *I desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ*: Did the Soul and body dye together as *Beryllus* taught? or did they sleep till the resurrection as others have groundlesly fancied? it had been a madness for *Paul* to desire a dissolution for the injoyment of Christ. For if this were so, he injoyed more of Christ whilst his Soul dwelt in its fleshly Tabernacle, then he should out of it.

There are but two waies of the Souls living known in Scripture, *viz.* the life of *faith*, and the life of *vision*, 1 *Cor.* 5. 5. those two divide all time both present and future betwixt them, 1 *Cor.* 13. 12. If when faith fails, Sight should not immediately succeed, what should become of the unbodied Soul? but blessed be God, this great, heart-establishing truth is evidently revealed in Scripture, *Luke* 23. 43. you have Christs promise *John* 14. 3. *I will come and receive you to my self.* O what a change will a few moments make upon your condition? rouse up dying Saint, when thy Soul is come out a little farther; when it shall stand like *Abraham* in its tent door, the Angels of God shall soon be with it: the Souls of the elect are as it were put out to the Angels

gels to nurſe, and when they dye, theſe Angels carry them home again to their fathers houſe: if an Angel were cauſed to fly ſwiftly to bring a Saint the anſwer of his prayer, *Dan.* 9. 21. How much more will the Angels come poſt from Heaven to receive and transfer the praying Soul it ſelf?

4. Arg. Farther, *It may much conduce to thy willingneſs to dye, to conſider; that by death God oft times hides his people out of the way of all temptations and troubles upon earth.* Rev. 14. 13. *Write, from henceforth bleſſed are the dead that dye in the Lord.* Tis Gods uſual way, when ſome extraordinary calamities are coming upon the world, to ſet his people out of harms way before hand, *Iſai.* 57. 1. *Merciful men are taken away from the evil to come.* So *Mich.* 7. 1, 2. When ſuch an evil time comes as is there deſcribed: *That they all lye in wait for blood, and every man hunts his brother with a net*: before that, God by an act of favour houſes his people before hand, doſt thou know what evil may be in the earth, which thou art ſo loath to leave? thy God removes thee for thy great advantage, thou art disbanded by death, and called off the field; other poor Saints muſt ſtand to it, and endure a great fight of afflictions.

Tis obſerved that *Methuſala* dyed the very year before the flood, *Auguſtin* a little before the ſacking of *Hippo*. *Pareus* juſt before the taking of *Heidelberg*: *Luther* obſerves that all the Apoſtles dyed before the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*: and *Luther* himſelf before the wars brake out in *Germany*: it may be the Lord ſees thy tender heart cannot endure to ſee the miſery, or bear the temptations that are coming, and therefore will now gather thee to thy grave in peace: and yet wilt thou cry, O ſpare me a little longer?

5. Arg. *If yet thy heart hang back, conſider the great advantage you will have by death, above all that ever you enjoyed on earth.* And that (1) As to your communion with God. (2) As to your communion with Saints.

1. For your communion with God, the time of perfecting that is now come; thy Soul ſhall ſhortly ſtand before the face of God, and have the immediate emanations and beamings forth of his glory upon it, here thy Soul is remote from God, the beams of his glory ſtrike it but obliquely and feebly, but ſhortly it will be under the line; and there the ſun ſhall ſtand ſtill as it did in *Gibeon*, there ſhall be no cloudings, nor declinings

ings of it. O how should this wrap thy Soul with desires of being uncloathed.

2. As for the injoyment of Saints, here indeed we have fellowship with them of the lower form; but that fellowship is so disswetened by remaining corruptions, that there is no satisfaction in it: as it is the greatest plague that can befall an hypocrite to live in a pure Church, so tis the greatest vexation to the Spirit of a Saint to live in a corrupt and disordered Church: But when death hath admitted you into that glorious assembly of the Spirits of just men made perfect, you shall have the desire of your hearts: here you cannot fully close one with another, yea, you cannot fully close with your own Souls. O what discords, jarrings, censurings, are here? what perfect blessed harmony there? in Heaven each Saint loves another as himself, they are altogether lovely. O my Soul hast thee away from the Lyons dens, from the mountains of *Bether*; from divided Saints, to those mountains of Myrhe, and hill of Frankinsense; thou art now going to thine own people as the Apostles phrase imports 2 *Cor.* 5. 8.

6. *Arg.* If all this will not doe, *Con-*

ſider what heavy burdens death will eaſe thy ſhoulders of.

In this Tabernacle we groan, being burdened. (1) With bodily diſtempers, how true do we find that of *Theophraſtus*, the Soul pays a dear rent for the tenement it now lives in: but glorified bodies are clogged with no indiſpoſitions, death is the beſt *Phyſician*, it will cure thee of all diſeaſes at once. (2) With the indwelling of ſin, this makes us groan from the very bowels, *Rom.* 7. 24. *But he that is dead is free from ſin, Rom.* 6. 7. Hath juſtification deſtroyed its *damning power*, and ſanctification its *Raigning power*; ſo glorification deſtroyes its very being and exiſtence. (3) We groan under temptations here, but as ſoon as we are out of the body, we are out of the reach of temptation: when once thou art got into Heaven, thou mayeſt ſay, now *Sathan* I am there where thou canſt not come: for as the damned in Hell are *malo obfirmati*; ſo fixed in ſin and miſery that their condition cannot be altered, ſo glorified Saints are *bono confirmati*, ſo fixed in holineſs and glory that they cannot be ſhaken. (4) Here we groan under various troubles and afflictions, but then the days of our mourning are ended.

God

God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes: O then! let us hast away that we may be at rest.

7. *Arg.* If still thou linger like *Lot in* Sodom, *then lastly, examine all the pleas and pretences for a longer time on earth.* Why art thou unwilling to dye?

1. *Object.* O I have many relations in the World, I know not what will become of them when I am gone.

Sol. 1. If thou art troubled about their bodies and outward condition, why should not that word satisfy thee, *Jer.* 49.11. *Leave thy fatherless children to me, I will keep them alive, and let thy Widows trust in me. Luther* in his last Will and Testament hath this expression, Lord thou hast given me wife and children I have nothing to leave them, but I commit them unto thee. O Father of the fatherless and judge of widows, *nutri, serva, doce*, nourish, keep, and teach them: or art thou troubled for their Souls? thou canst not convert them if thou shouldst live, and God can make thy prayers and counsels to live and take place upon them when thou art dead.

2. *Obj.* I would fain live to doe God more service in the world.

Sol. Well, but if he have no more ser-

vice for thee to doe here, why shouldst thou not say with *David*: if he have no delight to use me any farther, here am I, let him doe what seemeth him good: in this world thou hast no more to doe, but he is calling thee to an higher service and imployment in Heaven; and what thou wouldest doe for him here, he can doe that by other hands.

3. *Obj.* I am not yet fully ready, I am not as a bride compleatly adorned for the bridegroom.

Sol. 1. Thy justification is compleat already, though thy sanctification be not so; and the way to make it so is to dye, for till then, it will have its defects and wants.

4. *Obj.* O but I want assurance, if I had that, I could dye presently!

Sol. 1. Yea, there it sticks indeed; but then consider, that an hearty willingness to leave all the world to be freed from sin, and be with God, is the next way to that desired assurance: no carnal person was ever willing to dye upon this ground.

And thus I have finished those cases which so nearly concern the people of God, in the several conditions of their life, and taught them how to keep their hearts in all. I shall next apply the whole. 1. *Use*

I. *Uſe of Information.*

YOU have heard that the keeping of the heart is the great work of a Chriſtian in which the very Soul and life of Religion conſiſts, and without which all other duties are of no value with God: hence then I ſhall infer to the *conſternation* of hypocrites, and formal Profeſſors.

1. *That the pains and labours which many perſons have taken in religion, is but loſt labour, and pains to no purpoſe, ſuch as will never turn to account.*

Many great ſervices have been performed, many glorious works are wrought by men, which yet are utterly rejected by God, and ſhall never ſtand upon record in order to an eternal acceptation, becauſe they took no heed to keep their hearts with God in thoſe duties: this is that fatal rock upon which thouſands of vain profeſſors ſplit themſelves eternally, they are curious about the externals of religion, but regardleſs of their hearts. O how many hours have ſome Profeſſors ſpent in hearing, praying, reading, conferring? and yet as to the main end

of religion, as good they had ſate ſtill and done nothing: for all this ſignifies nothing, the great work, I mean heart work; being all the while neglected: tell me thou vain profeſſor, when didſt thou ſhed a teare for the deadneſs, hardneſs, unbelief, or earthlineſs of thy heart? thinkſt thou, ſuch an eaſie religion can ſave thee? if ſo, we may invert Chriſts words, and ſay, wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to life; and many there be that goe in thereat: hear me thou ſelf deluding hypocrit, thou that haſt put of God with hartleſs duties, thou that haſt acted in religion as if thou hadſt been bleſſing an Idol, that could not ſearch, and diſcover thy heart: thou that haſt offered to God but the skin of the ſacrifice, not the marrow, fat and inwards of it; how wilt thou abide the coming of the Lord? how wilt thou hold up thy head before him when he ſhall ſay, O thou diſſembling falſe hearted man? how couldſt thou profeſs religion? with what face couldſt thou ſo often tell me, thou lovedſt me, when thou kneweſt all the while in thine own conſcience, that thine heart was not with me? O tremble to think, what a fearful judgment it is to be given over to a heedleſs

and

and careleſs heart: and then to have religious duties in ſtead of a rattle to quiet and ſtill the Conſcience!

2. Hence I alſo infer for the *humiliation* even of upright hearts, *that unleſs the people of God ſpend more time and pains about their hearts then generally and ordinarily they do, they are never like to do God much ſervice, or be owners of much comfort in this World.*

I may ſay of that Chriſtian that is remiſs and careleſs in keeping his heart, as *Jacob* ſaid of *Reuben, Thou ſhalt not excel*: It grieves me to ſee how many Chriſtians there are that go up and down dejected and complaining, that live at a poor low rate; both of ſervice and comfort, and how can they expect it ſhould be otherwiſe as long as they live at ſuch a careleſs rate? O how little of their time is ſpent in the cloſet, in ſearching, humbling, and quickning their hearts?

You ſay, your hearts are dead; and doe you wonder they are ſo as long as you keep them not with the fountain of life? if your bodies had been diated as your Souls have been, they would have been dead too: never expect better hearts till you take more pains with them; *qui fugit molam, fugit farinam*:

he

he that will not have the *ſweat*, muſt not expect the *ſweet* of Religion.

O Chriſtians! I fear your zeal and ſtrength hath run in the wrong chaunel: I fear moſt of us may take up the Churches complaint, *Cant.* 1. 6. *They have made me the keeper of the Vineyards, but mine own Vineyard have I not kept.* Two things have eaten up the time and ſtrength of the Profeſſors of this Generation, and ſadly diverted them from heart work. (1) Fruitleſs controverſies ſtarted by Sathan, I doubt not to this very purpoſe, to take us off from practical godlineſs, to make us puzzle our *heads*, when we ſhould be ſearching our *hearts*. O how little have we minded that of the Apoſtle, *Heb.* 13. 9. *Tis a good thing that the heart be eſtabliſhed with Grace, and not with meats*: (*i. e.*) with diſputes and controverſies about meats, *which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.*

O how much better is it to ſee men *live exactly*, then to hear them *diſpute ſubtilly*! theſe unfruitful queſtions, how have they rendred the Churches? waſted time and ſpirits, and called Chriſtians off from their main buſineſs, from looking to their own vineyard? what think you Sirs? had it not been better if the queſtions

ſtions ventilated among the people of God of late days, had been ſuch as theſe? how ſhall a man diſcern the ſpecial, from the common operations of the Spirit? how may a Soul diſcern its firſt declineings from God? how may a backſliding Chriſtian recover his firſt love? how may the heart be preſerved from unſeaſonable thoughts in duty? how may a boſome ſin be diſcovered and mortified, &c. Would not this have tended more to the credit of religion, and comfort of your Souls? O tis time to repent, and be aſhamed of this folly! when I read what *Suarez* a *Papiſt* ſaid, who wrote many Tomes of diſputations, that he priſed the time he ſet apart for the ſearching and examining of his heart, in reference to God, above all the time that ever he ſpent in other ſtudies: I am aſhamed to find the profeſſors of this age yet inſenſible of their folly: ſhall the Conſcience of a *Suarez* feel a relenting pang for ſtrength and time ſo ill imployed? and ſhall not yours? this is it your Miniſters long ſince warned you of: your ſpiritual nurſes were afraid of the rickets when they ſaw your heads only to grow, and your hearts to wither. O when will God beat our ſwords into plow-

plowſhares! I mean our diſputes and contentions, into practical godlineſs. (2) Another cauſe of neglecting our heart hath been earthly incumbrances: the heads and hearts of many have been filled with ſuch a crowd and noiſe of worldly buſineſs, that they have ſadly and ſenſibly declined and withered in their zeal, love and delight in God, in their heavenly, ſerious, and profitable way of converſing with man.

O how hath this wilderneſs intangled us! our diſcourſes and conferences, nay our very prayers and duties have a tang of it: we have had ſo much work without doors, that we have been able to doe but little within. It was the ſad complaint of an holy one, O Mr. *Strong*, ſaith he! tis ſad to think, how many precious opportunities I have loſt, how many ſweet motions, and admonitions of the Spirit I have poſted over unfruitfully, and made the Lord to ſpeak in vain, in the ſecret illapſes of his Spirit, the Lord hath called upon me, but my worldly thoughts did ſtill lodge within me, and there was no place in my heart for ſuch calls of God. ſurely there is a way of injoying God, even in our worldly imployments;

God

God would never have put us upon them to our loſs. *Enoch* walked with God, and begat ſons and daughters, *Gen.* 5. 19. He walked with God, but did not retire and ſeperate himſelf from the things of this life: and the *Angels* that are imployed by Chriſt in the things of this world (for the Spirit of the living creatures is in the wheels) they are finite creatures, and cannot be in a twofold *ubi* at one time, yet they loſe nothing of the beatifical viſion, all the time of their adminiſtration, for *Matth.* 18. 10. *their Angels* (even whileſt they are imployed for them) *Behold the face of their father which is in heaven.* We need not loſe our viſions by our imployments, if the fault were not our own: alas! that ever Chriſtians who ſtand at the doore of eternity, and have more work upon their hands then this poor moment of interpoſing time is ſufficient for, ſhould yet be filling both our heads and hearts with trifles.

3. Hence alſo I infer for the *awakening* of all, *that if the keeping of the heart be the great work of a Chriſtian, then there are but few real Chriſtians in the world.*

Indeed, if every one that hath learned the dialect of Chriſtianity, and can talke like

like a Saint, if every one that hath giſts and parts, and by the common aſſiſting preſence of the Spirit can preach, pray, or diſcourſe like a Chriſtian: in a word, if ſuch as aſſociate themſelves with the people of God, and delight in ordinances, might paſs for Chriſtians, the number then is great.

But alas! to what a ſmall number will they ſhrink, if you judge them by this rule! how few are there, that make Conſcience of keeping their hearts, watching their thoughts, judging their ends, *&c.* O there be but few cloſet men among profeſſors! tis far eaſier for men to be reconciled to any duties in religion then to theſe: the prophane part of the world will not ſo much as touch with the outſide of religious duties, much leſs to this: and for the hypocrit though he be polite and curious about thoſe externals, yet you can never perſwade him to this inward work, this difficult work: this work to which there is no inducement by humane applauſe, this work that would quickly diſcover what the hypocrit cares not to know, ſo that by a general conſent, this heart work is left to the hands of a few ſecret ones and I tremble to think in how few hands it is.

2. *Uſe*

II. *Uſe for Exhortation.*

IF the keeping of the heart be ſo important a buſineſs, if ſuch choice advantages accrew to you thereby; if ſo many dear and precious intereſts be wrapt up in it, then let me call upon the people of God every where to fall cloſe to this work.

O ſtudy your hearts, watch your hearts, keep your hearts: away with fruitleſs controverſies and idle queſtions, away with empty names and vain ſhews, away with unprofitable diſcourſe & bold cenſures of others, turn in upon your ſelves, get into your cloſets, and now reſolve to dwell there: you have been ſtrangers to this work too long, you have kept others vineyards too long, you have trifled about the borders of religion too long, this world hath deteined you from your great work too long; will you now reſolve to look better to your hearts? will you haſte and come out of the crowds of buſineſs, and clamours of the world? and retire your ſelves more then you have done? O that this day you would reſolve upon it!

Reader, methinks I ſhould prevail with thee;

thee; all that I beg for is but this, that thou wouldſt ſtep aſide a little oftner to talk with God, and thine own heart, that thou wouldſt not ſuffer every trifle to divert thee, that thou wouldeſt keep a more true and faithful account of thy thoughts and affections: that thou wouldſt but ſeriouſly demand of thine own heart, at leaſt every evening, O my heart where haſt thou been to day? whether haſt thou made a rode to day? if all that hath been ſaid by way of inducement be not enough, I have yet more motives to offer you: and the firſt is this.

1. Motive. *The ſtudying, obſerving, and diligent keeping of your own hearts will marvellouſly help your underſtanding in the deep myſteries of Religion.*

An honeſt well experienced heart is a ſingular help to a weak head, ſuch a heart will ſerve you in ſtead of a *Commentary* upon a great part of the Scriptures: by this means you ſhall far better underſtand the things of God than the learned *Rabbies* and profound *Doctors* (if graceleſs and unexperienced) ever did, you ſhall not only have a more clear, but a more ſweet perception and guſt of them: a man may diſcourſe orthodoxly and profoundly

profoundly of the nature and effects of faith, the troubles and comforts of Conſcience, the ſweetneſs of Communion with God, that never felt the efficacy and ſweet impreſſions of theſe things upon his own ſpirit: but O how dark and dry are theſe notions, compared with his, upon whoſe heart they have been acted? when ſuch a man reads *Davids* Pſalms, or *Pauls* Epiſtles, there he finds his own objections made and anſwered: O ſaith he, theſe holy men ſpeak my very hear! their doubts were mine, their troubles mine, and their experiences mine. I remember *Chryſoſtome* ſpeaking to his people of *Antioch* about ſome choice experiences, uſeth this expreſſion. *Sciunt initiati quid dico*: thoſe that are initiated know what I ſay, experience is the beſt Schoolmaſter. O then! ſtudy your hearts, keep your hearts.

2. Mot. *The ſtudy and obſervation of your own hearts will antidote you againſt the dangerous and infecting errours of the times and places you live in.*

For what think you is the reaſon that ſo many profeſſors in *England* have departed from the faith, giving heed to fables: that ſo many thouſands have

been led away by the errour of the wicked, that Jesuits and Quakers who have sown corrupt doctrine, have had such plentiful harvests among us, but because they have met with a company of empty notional professors that never knew what belongs to practical godliness, and the study of their own hearts.

If professors did but give diligence to study, search, and watch their own hearts, they would have that ἰδιον στήριγμον that stedfastness of their own that *Peter* speaks of 2 *Pet.* 3. 17. and this would ballast and settle them, *Heb.* 13. 9. Suppose a subtil Papist should talke to such of the dignity, and merit of good works, could he ever work the perswasion of it into that heart that is conscious to it self of so much darkness, deadness, distraction, and unbelief attending its best duties? 'tis a good rule, *non est disputandum de gustu:* there is no disputing against taste: what a man hath felt and tasted, one cannot beat him off from that by argument.

3. Mot. *Your care and diligence in keeping your hearts, will prove one of the best evidences of your sincerity.*

I know no external act of religion that differences

differences the sound from the unsound professor: tis wonderful to consider, how far hypocrits go in all external duties, how plausibly they can order the outward man, hiding all their indecencies from the observation of the world.

But then, they take no heed to their hearts, they are not in secret, what they appear to be in publick: and before this tryal no hypocrit can stand; tis confest, they may in a fit, under a pang upon a death-bed, cry out of the wickedness of their hearts; but alas! there is no heed to be taken to these extorted complaints: in our law no credit is to be given to the testimony of one upon the rack, because it may be supposed, that the extremity of the torture may make him say any thing to be eased, but if self jealousie, care, and watchfulness be the daily workings and frames of thy heart, it strongly argues the sincerity of it: for what but the sence of a divine eye, what but the real hatred of sin as sin, could put thee upon those secret duties, which lye out of the observation of all creatures.

If then it be a desirable thing in thine eyes to have a fair testimony of thine integrity, and to know of a truth that

thou feareſt God: then ſtudy thine heart, watch thy heart, keep thy heart.

4. Mot. *How fruitful ſweet and comfortable would all Ordinances and Duties be to us if our hearts were better kept?*

O what precious communion might you have with God, every time you approach him; if your hearts were but in frame! you might then ſay with *David*, *Pſal.* 104. 34. *My meditation of him ſhall be ſweet.* That which loſes all our comforts in ordinances and more ſecret duties, is the indiſpoſedneſs of the heart: a Chriſtian whoſe heart is in a good frame gets the ſtart of all others that come with him in that duty: they are tugging hard to get up their hearts to God, now trying this argument upon them and then that, to quicken and affect them, and ſometimes goe away as bad as they came. Sometimes the duty is almoſt ended before their hearts begin to ſtirr to feel any warmth, quickning, or power from it: but all this while the prepared heart is at its work; this is he that ordinarily gets the firſt ſight of Chriſt in a Sermon: the firſt ſeal from Chriſt in a Sacrament: the firſt kiſs from Chriſt in ſecret prayer. I tell you, and I tell you

you but what I have felt, that Prayers and Sermons would appear to you other manner of things then they doe, did you but bring better ordered hearts unto them, you would not goe away dejected and drooping, O this hath been a loſt day, a loſt duty to me, if you had not loſt your hearts it might not be ſo: if then the comfort of ordinances be ſweet, look to your hearts, keep your hearts.

5. Mot. *Acquaintance with your own hearts would be a Fountain of matter to you in Prayer.*

A man that is diligent in heart work, and knows the ſtate of his own Soul; will have a fountain fulneſs of matter to ſupply him richly in all his addreſſes to God: his tongue ſhall not faulter, and make pauſes for want of matter, *Pſal.* 45. 1. *my heart is enditing a good matter:* or as *Montanus* renders the original, my heart is boyling up good matter, like a living ſpring that is ſtill bubling up freſh water; and then my tongue is as the pen of a ready writer: others muſt pump their memories, rack their inventions, and are often at a loſs when they have done all: but if thou have kept and faithfully ſtudied thine own heart, twill be

with thee (as *Job* ſpeaks in another caſe) like bottles full of new wine, that want vent, which are ready to burſt: as holy matter flows plentifully, ſo more feelingly and ſweetly from ſuch a heart: when a heart experienced Chriſtian is mourning before God over ſome ſpecial heart corruption, wraſtling with God for the ſupply of ſome ſpecial inward want, he ſpeaks not as other men doe, that have learned to pray by rote, their confeſſions and petitions are ſqueezed out, his drop freely like pure honey from the combe, tis a happineſs then to be with or neer ſuch a Chriſtian. I remember *Bernard* having given rules to prepare the heart for prayer concludes them thus, *Et cum talis fueris memento mei:* and (ſaith he) when thy heart is in this frame then remember me.

6. Mot. *By this the decayed power of religion will be recovered again among profeſſors, which is the moſt deſirable ſight in this world.*

O that I might live to ſee that day! when profeſſors ſhall not walk in a vain ſhew, when they ſhall pleaſe themſelves no more with a name to live, being ſpiritually dead: when they ſhall be no more

more (as many of them now are) a company of frothy, vain, and unserious persons, but the majestick beams of holiness shining from their heavenly, and serious conversations shall awe the world, and command reverence from all that are about them: when they shall warm the hearts of those that come nigh them, so that men shall say, God is in these men of a truth.

Well, such a time may again be exspected according to that promise, *Isai.* 60. 21. *The people shall be all righteous* But till we fall closer to this great work of keeping our hearts, I am out of hopes to see those blessed daies: I cannot exspect better times, till God give better hearts: doth it not grieve you to see what a scorn religion is made in the world, what objects of contempt and scorn the professors of it are made in the world.

Professors, would you recover your credit? would you again obtain an honourable testimony in the Consciences of your very enemies? then, keep your hearts, watch your hearts: tis the looseness frothiness, and earthliness of your hearts that hath made your lives so; and

this hath brought you under contempt of the world, you first lost your sights of God, and communion with him, then your heavenly and serious deportment among men; and by that, your interest in their Consciences, O then! for the credit of religion, for the honour of your profession, keep your hearts.

7. Mot. *By diligence in keeping our hearts, we should prevent, and remove the fatal scandals and stumbling blocks out of the way of the world.*

Wo to the world (saith Christ) *because of offences, Matth.* 18.7. doth not shame cover your faces? doe not your hearts bleed within you to heare of the scandalous miscarriages of many loose professors? could you not like *Shem* and *Japhet* goe backward with a garment to cover the shame of many professors? how is that worthy name blasphemed? 2 *James* 7. 2. *Sam.* 12. 13, 14. the hearts of the righteous sadned, *Psal.* 25.3. *Ezek.* 36. 20. by this the world is fearfully prejudiced against Christ and religion, the bonds of death made fast upon their Souls: those that had a general love and likeing to the ways of God, startled and quite driven back, and thus Soul bloud

bloud is ſhed: wo to the World.

Yea, how are the Conſciences of fallen profeſſors plunged and even overwhelmed in the deeps of trouble? God inwardly excommunicating their Souls from all comfortable fellowſhip with himſelf, and the joys of his ſalvation: infinite are the miſchiefs that come by the ſcandalous lives of profeſſors.

And what is the true cauſe and reaſon of all this; but the neglecting of their hearts? were our hearts better kept, all this would be prevented: had *David* kept his *heart*, he had not broken his *bones*: a neglected careleſs heart, muſt of neceſſity produce a diſorderly ſcandalous life. I thanke God for the freedome and faithfulneſs of a reverend brother in ſhewing profeſſors their manifold miſcarriages, and from my heart doe wiſh that when their wounds have been throughly ſearched by that *probe*, God would be pleaſed to heal them by this *Plaiſter*. O profeſſors! if ever you will keep religion ſweet, if ever you hope to recover the credit of it in the world, keep your hearts: either keep your hearts, or loſe your credit: keep your hearts or loſe

Goſpel glaſs.

loſe your comforts: keep your hearts, leaſt ye ſhed Soul bloud: what words can expreſs the deep concernments, the wonderful conſequences of this work! every thing puts a neceſſity, a ſolemnity, a beauty upon it.

8. Mot. *An heart well kept will fit you for any condition God caſts you into, or any ſervice he hath to uſe you in.*

He that hath learnt how to keep his heart lowly, is fit for proſperity: and he that knows how to uſe and apply to it Scripture promiſes, and ſupports, is fit to paſs through any adverſity: he that can deny the pride and ſelfiſhneſs of his heart is fit to be imployed in any ſervice for God: ſuch a man was *Paul*, he did not only ſpend his time in preaching to others, in keeping others vineyards, but he lookt to himſelf, kept his own vineyard, 1 *Cor.* 9. 27. *Leaſt when I have preached to others, I my ſelf ſhould be a caſtaway:* and what an eminent inſtrument was he for God, he could turn his hand to any work, he could dexterouſly manage both an adverſe and proſperous condition: I know how to abound, and how to ſuffer want; let the people deifie him, it moves him not, unleſs to indignation:

Let

Let them ſtone him, he can bear it: *if a man purge himſelf from theſe* (ſaith he 2 *Tim.* 2. 21.) *He ſhall be a Veſſel unto honour, ſanctified and meet for the maſters uſe, and prepared unto every good work.*

Firſt the heart muſt be purged; and then tis prepared for any ſervice of God: when the heart of *Iſaiah* was purified, which was the thing ſignified by the touching of his lips with a coal from the Altar, *Iſai.* 6. 7. then he was fit for Gods work: *here am I, ſend me,* v. 8. a man that hath not learned to keep his heart, put him upon any ſervice for God, and if it be attended with honour, it ſhall ſwell up and overtop his ſpirit: if with ſuffering it will exanimate and ſink him.

Jeſus Chriſt had an inſtrumental fitneſs for his fathers work above all the ſervants that ever God imployed, he was zealous in publick work for God, ſo zealous, that ſometimes he forgat to eat bread, yea, that his friends thought he had been beſides himſelf: but yet he ſo carried on his publick work, as not to forget his own private communion with God; and therefore you read in *Matth.* 14. 23. that when he had been labouring

ing all day yet after that, he went up to a mountain apart to pray, and was there alone. O let the keepers of the vineyards look to their own vineyard! we shall never be so instrumental to the good of others, as when we are most diligent about our own Souls.

9. Mot. *If the people of God would more diligently keep their hearts, how exceedingly would the communion of Saints be thereby sweetned?*

How goodly then would be thy tents O *Jacob*, and thy tabernacles O *Israel*! then as tis prophesied of the Jews, *Zech.* 8. 23. *Men would say, we will go with you, for we have heard that God is among you.* Tis the fellowship your Souls have with the Father and with the Son, that draws out the desires of others after fellowship with you. 1 *Joh.* 1. 3. I tell you if Saints would be perswaded to take more pains, and spend more time about their hearts; there would quickly be such a divine lustre upon the face of their conversations that men would account it no small priviledge, to be with or near them.

Tis the pride, passion, and earthlinesse of our hearts that hath spoiled Christian fellow-

fellowſhip: whence is it? that when Chriſtians meet, they are often jarring and contending, but only their unmortified paſſions: whence are their uncharitable cenſures of their brethren, but only from ſelf ignorance? why are they ſo rigid, and unmerciful towards thoſe that are fallen? but becauſe they conſider not themſelves, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks *Gal. 6.* 1. why is their diſcourſe ſo frothy and unprofitable when they meet? is not this from the earthlineſs and vanity of their hearts?

My brethren, theſe be the things that have ſpoiled Chriſtian fellowſhip, and made it become a dry and ſapleſs thing; ſo that many Chriſtians are even weary of it, and are ready to ſay with the prophet *Jer. 9. 2. O that I had a Cottage in the wilderneſs, &c. That I might leave my people and go from them!* and with *David* Pſal. 120. 6. *My ſoul hath long dwelt with them that hate peace*: This hath made them long for the grave, that they might goe from them that are not their own people, to them that are their own people, as the original of that text imports, 2 *Cor.* 5. 8.

But now, if profeſſors would ſtudy their

their own hearts more, watch and keep them better, all this would be prevented; and the beauty and glory of communion again reſtored: they would divide no more, contend no more, cenſure raſhly no more; when their hearts are in tune their tongues will not jarre, how charitable, pitiful and tender will they be one of onother, when every one is daily humbled under the evil of his own heart; Lord haſten thoſe much deſired daies, and bleſs theſe counſels in order to them.

10. Mot. *Laſtly, By this the comforts of the Spirit, and precious influences of all Ordinances would be fixed, and much longer preſerved in your Souls than now they are.*

Ah! what would I give, that my Soul might be preſerved in that frame I ſometimes find it after an Ordinance! *aliquandò intromittis me domine in affectum multum inuſitatum introrſus ad neſcio quam dulcedinem*, &c. Sometimes O Lord, (ſaith one of the fathers ſweetly) thou admitteſt me into the moſt inward, unuſual and ſweet delights, to I know not what ſweetneſs, which were it perfected in me, I know not what it would be; or rather, what it would not be. But alas!

alas! the heart grows careleſs again, and quickly returns, like water removed from the fire to its native coldneſs: could you but keep thoſe things for ever in your hearts, what Chriſtians would you be! what lives would you live! and how is it that theſe things remain no longer with us? doubtleſs it is becauſe we ſuffer our hearts to take cold again: we ſhould be as careful after an ordinance or duty to prevent this, as one that comes out of an hot bath, or great ſweat is; of going out into the chill air: we have our hot and cold fits by turns, and what is the reaſon but our unskilfulneſs and careleſneſs in keeping the heart.

Tis a thouſand pities, that the ordinances of God, as to their quickning and comforting effects, ſhould be like thoſe humane ordinances the Apoſtle ſpeaks of, that periſh in the uſing. O then, let me ſay to you, as *Job.* 15. 11. *Doe the conſolations of God ſeem ſmall to you?* Look over theſe ten ſpecial benefits, weigh them in a juſt ballance; are they ſmall matters? is it a ſmall matter to have thy weak underſtanding aſſiſted? thine endangered Soul antidoted, thy ſincerity cleered, thy communion with God

God ſweetned, thy ſails filled in prayer, is it a ſmall thing to have the decayed power of godlineſs again recovered, all fatal ſcandals removed, an inſtrumental fitneſs to ſerve Chriſt obtained, the Communion of Saints reſtored to its primitive glory, and the influences of ordinances abiding in the Souls of Saints, if theſe be no common bleſſings, no ſmall benefits, then ſurely tis a great duty to keep the heart with all diligence.

The III. *Uſe for Direction.*

THE next uſe ſhall be for direction to ſome ſpecial means for the keeping of the heart: and here beſides what hath been hinted in the explication of the duty, *page* 9, 10, 11, 12, 13. to which I refer the reader and all thoſe directions throughout the whole, appropriated to particular caſes and ſeaſons, I ſhall farther adde ſeveral other general means of excellent uſe to this end, and the firſt is this.

1. Means. *Would you thus keep your hearts*

hearts as hath been perſwaded, then furniſh your hearts richly with the word of God, which is their beſt preſervative againſt ſin.

Keep the word, and the word will keep you: as the firſt receiving of the word regenerated your hearts, ſo the keeping of the word within you; will preſerve your hearts. *Col.* 3. 16. *Let the word of Chriſt dwell richly in you,* let it dwell, not tarry with you for a night, and let it dwel richly, or plentifully; in all that is of it, in its commands, promiſes, threats, in all that is in you, in your underſtandings, memories conſciences, affections, and then twil preſerve your hearts; *Pſal.* 119. 11. *Thy word have I hid in mine heart that I might not ſin againſt thee:* Tis the ſhipperineſs of our hearts in reference to the word, that cauſes ſo many ſlips in our lives, Conſcience cannot be urged, or awed, with forgotten truths: but keep it in the heart, and it will keep both heart and life upright, *Pſal.* 37. 31. *The law of his God is in his heart, none of his ſteps ſhall ſlide,* or if he doe, the word will recover the ſtraying heart again, *Matth.* 26. 57. *Then Peter remembred* [*the words of Jeſus*] *and wept bitterly*: we never loſe our hearts till they have firſt loſt

the efficacious and powerful impreſſions of the word.

2. Mea. *Call your hearts frequently to an account, if ever you mean to keep them with God.*

Thoſe that put a ſtock into the hands of unfaithful or ſuſpicious ſervants, will be ſure to make ſhort reckonings with them: *the heart is deceitful above all things, and deſperately wicked, Jer.* 17. 9. O tis as neceſſary, as ſweet, that we and our reins; that is, we and our ſecret thoughts confer together every night, *Pſal.* 16. 7. we ſhould call our hearts to account every evening, and ſay, O my heart! where haſt thou been to day? where have thy thoughts wandred to day? what account canſt thou give of them? O naughty heart, vain heart, couldſt thou not abide by the fountain of delights? is there better entertainment with the creature than with God? the oftner the heart meets with rebukes and checks for wandring, the leſs twill wander; if every vain thought were retracted with a ſigh, every excurſion of the heart from God with a ſevere check; it would not dare ſo boldly and frequently to digreſs and ſtep aſide: thoſe actions which

are

are committed with reluctancy are not committed with frequency.

3. Mea. *He that will keep his heart, muſt take heed of plunging himſelf into ſuch a multiplicity of earthly buſineſs, as he cannot manage without neglecting his main buſineſs.*

It cannot be imagined he ſhould keep his heart with God, that hath loſt himſelf in a wood of earthly buſineſs: take heed you doe not pinch your Souls by gratifying the immoderate deſires of your fleſh. I wiſh many Chriſtians could truly ſay what a *Heathen* once did, *I doe not give, but only lend myſelf to my buſineſs.* Tis ſaid *Germanicus* reigned in the Romans *hearts: Tyberius* only in their *Provinces*: though the world be in your hands, let it not juſtle Chriſt out of your hearts. *Seneca.*

Take heed Chriſtian, leaſt thy *ſhop* ſteal away thy heart from thy *cloſet*. God never intended earthly imployments for a *ſtop*, but rather for a *ſtep* to heavenly ones. O let not *Ariſtippus* the *Heathen* ariſe in judgement againſt thee, who ſaid, *he would rather neglect his means then his mind, his farm then his Soul.* If thy ſhip be overladen thou muſt caſt ſome over-

bord: more busines then thou canst well mannage, is like more meat then thou canst well digest, which will quickly make a sickly Soul.

4. Mea. *He that means to keep his heart must carefully observe its first declinings from God, and stop it there.*

He that will keep his house in good repair, must stop every chinke assoone as discovered, and he that will keep his heart must not let a vain thought be long neglected: the serpent of heart Apostasie is best killed in the egge of a small remission. O if many poor decayed Christians had lookt to their hearts in time, they had never come to that sad pass they now are: we may say of heart neglects, as the *Apostle* doth of vain bablings, that they increase to more and more ungodliness: *nemo repentè fit turpissimus*, little sins neglected will quickly become great and masterless: the greatest *Crocodile* once lay in an egge, the greatest oake was once but an acorn: the firing of a small train of powder may blow up all by leading to a greater quantity: men little think what a proud, vain, wanton, or worldly thought may grow to: behold how great a matter a little fire kindles!

5. Mea.

5. Mea. *Take heed of loſeing the livelineſs and ſweetneſs of your communion with God, leaſt thereby your hearts be looſed off from God.*

The heart is an hungry and reſtleſs thing, it will have ſomething to feed upon; if it enjoy nothing from God, it will hunt for ſomething among the creatures, and there it often loſes it ſelf, as well as its end: there is nothing more engages the heart to a conſtancy and evenneſs in walking with God, then the ſweetneſs which it taſts therein: as the Gauls when once they taſted the ſweet wine of *Italy* could never be ſatisfied till they conquered the countrey where it grew.

'Tis true, Conſcience of duty may keep the heart from neglecting it, but when there is no higher motive, it drives on deadly, and is filled with diſtractions, that which we delight in, we are never weary of, as is evident in the motions of the heart to earthly things, where the wheels being oyled with delight, run nimbly, and have often need of rigging; the motions of the heart upward would be as free, if its delight in heavenly things were as great.

6. Mea. *Habituate thy heart to ſpiritual meditations, if thou wouldſt have it freed from thoſe burdenſome diverſions.*

By this means you will get a facillity, and dexterity in heart work: tis pity thoſe ſmaller portions of our time betwixt ſolemn duties ſhould lye upon our hands and be rendred uſeleſs to us. O learn to ſave, and be good husbands upon your thoughts; to this purpoſe, a *neat Authour* ſpeaks, theſe Parentheſes which happen to come between the more ſolemn paſſages (whether buſineſs or recreations) of humane life, are wont to be loſt by moſt men; for want of a due value for them, and even by good men, for want of skill to preſerve them: for though they doe not properly deſpiſe them; yet they neglect, or loſe them, for want of knowing how to reſcue them; or what to doe with them, but although grains of ſand, and aſhes be a part, but of a deſpicable ſmalneſs, and lyable to be ſcattered and blown away, yet the skilful artificer by a vehement fire brings numbers of theſe to afford him that noble ſubſtance glaſs, by whoſe help

Boyles occaſional reflect. pag. 9. 10.

"help we may both ſee our ſelves, and "our blemiſhes lively repreſented, (as in "looking glaſſes) and diſcern cæleſtial "objects (as with Telescopes) and "with the ſun beams kindle diſpoſed "materials (as with burning glaſſes) "ſo when theſe little fragments, or par-"cels of time, which if not carefully "lookt to would be diſſipated and loſt, "come to be managed by a skilful Con-"templator, and to be improved by the "cæleſtial fire of devotion they may be "ſo ordered as to afford us both looking "glaſſes to dreſs our Souls by, and pro-"ſpectives to diſcover heavenly won-"ders, and incentives to inflame our "hearts with zeal, thus far he.

Something of that nature I have under hand, for a publick benefit; if God give life to finiſh; and opportunity to produce it: certainly this is a great advantage for the keeping of the heart with God.

IV. *Use for Consolation.*

I Shall now close the whole with a word or two of consolation to all dilligent and serious Christians, that faithfully and closely ply heart work; that are groaning and weeping in secret over the hardness, pride, earthlinesse and vanity of their hearts, that are fearing and trembling over the experienced deceitfulness, and falsness of them, whilest other vain professors eyes are abroad, their time and strength eaten up by fruitless disputes, and earthly imployments; or at best by a cold and formal performance of some heartless and empty duties: poor Christian, I have three things to offer thee in order to thy support and comfort, and doubtless either of them alone mixed with faith is sufficient to comfort thee over all the trouble thou hast with thine own heart.

1. Comfort. *This argues thy heart to be upright and honest, what ever thy other gifts and abillities are.*

Tis uprightness of heart will comfort thee upon a death-bed, 2 *Kings* 20. 2, 3.

Then

Then he turned his face to the wall and prayed to the Lord, saying, remember now O Lord, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, &c.

I am really of his mind who said, *si mihi daretur optio eligerim christiani rustici sordidissimum & maxime agreste opus præ omnibus victoriis & triumphis Alexandri aut Cæsaris*: might I have my wish, I would prefer the most despicable and sordid work of a rustick Christian, before all the victories and triumphs of *Alexander* or *Cesar*. Yea, let me adde, before all the elaborated duties and excellent gifts of vain professors: before the tongues of men and Angels: it will signifie more to my comfort to spend one solitary hour in mourning before the Lord over heart corruption, then many hours in a seeming zealous, but really dead performance of common duties with the greatest inlargements and richest embellishments of parts and gifts.

By this very thing Christ distinguishes the formal and serious Christian, *Matth.* 6. 5. The one is for the street and Synagogue, for the observation and applause of men, but the other is a closet man: he drives on a home trade, a heart trade:

never

never be troubled then for the want of thoſe things that a man may have and be eternally damned, but rather bleſs God for that which none but the favorites, and darlings of heaven have: many a one is now in hell that had a better head then thine, and many a one now in Heaven that complained of as bad an heart as thine.

2. Com. *Know farther for thy comfort, that God would never leave thee under ſo many heart troubles and burdens, if he intended not thy real benefit thereby.*

Thou art often crying out, Lord why is it thus, why goe I mourning all the day, having ſorrow in my heart, thus long I have been exerciſed with hardneſs of heart, and to this day have not obtained a broken heart; many years have I been praying and ſtriving againſt vain thoughts, yet am ſtill infeſted and perplexed with them. O when ſhall I get a better heart! I have been in travel, and brought forth but wind, I have obtained no deliverance, neither have the corruptions of my heart fallen. I have brought this heart many times to prayers, ſermons, Sacraments, expecting and hoping for a cure from them, and ſtill my ſore runneth and ceaſeth not.

Penſive

Penſive Soul, let this comfort thee, thy God deſigns thy benefit, even by theſe occaſions of thy ſad complaints; For (1.) Hereby he would let thee ſee what thy heart by Nature is and was, and therein take notice how much thou art beholding to free-Grace: He leaves thee under theſe exerciſes of Spirit, that thou mayeſt lye as with thy face upon the ground, admiring that ever the Lord of Glory ſhould take ſuch a Toad; ſo vile a Creature into his boſome: thy baſe heart, if it be good for nothing elſe; yet ſerves to commend and ſet off, the unſearchable riches of Free-Grace. (2.) This ſerves to beat thee off continually from reſting, yea, or but glancing upon thine own righteouſneſs, or excellency: the corruption of thy heart, working in all thy duties, makes thee ſenſible to feel that the bed is too ſhort, and the covering too narrow: Were it not for thoſe reflections thou haſt after duties, upon the dulneſs and diſtractions of thine heart in them; how apt wouldſt thou be to fall in love with, and admire thy own Performances, and Inlargements? For if notwithſtanding theſe, thou haſt much to do with the pride of thy heart

heart; how much more, if such humbling and self-abasing considerations were wanting. And lastly this tends to make thee the more compassionate and tender towards others, Perhaps thou wouldst have little pity for the distresses, and soul troubles of others, if thou hadst less experience of thine own.

Com. 3. *To conclude, God will shortly put a blessed end to all these troubles, cares, and watchings.*

The time is coming when thy heart shall be as thou wouldst have it, when thou shalt be discharged of these cares, fears and sorrows, and never cry out: Oh my hard, my proud, my vain, my earthly heart any more: when all darkness shall be banished from thine understanding, and thou shalt clearly discover all truths in God, that chrystal Ocean of truth: when all vanity shall be purged perfectly out of thy thoughts, and they be everlastingly, ravishingly, and delightfully entertained and exercised upon that supream Goodness, and infinite excellency of God, from whom they shall never start any more like a broken Bow: And as for thy pride, passion, earthliness, and all other the matters

ters of thy complaint and trouble, it ſhall be ſaid of them, as of the *Egyptians* to *Iſrael*: *Stand ſtill, and ſee the ſalvation of God*: theſe corruptions thou ſeeſt to day, henceforth thou ſhalt ſee them no more for ever: when thou ſhalt lay down thy weapons, of prayers, tears, and groans, and put on the Armour of light, not to fight, but to triumph in.

Lord, when ſhall this bleſſed day come? How long? How long? Holy and True; My ſoul waiteth for thee; Come my Beloved, and be thou like a Roe, or a young Hart upon the Mountains of *Bether*. Amen.

FINIS.

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